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The "States" in Villages

A Look at Schools in Rural China

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Preface

This book first appeared in Chinese 16 years ago. It is an analysis in the form of a prose, not a paper, of the field investigation records I made at the time. I studied literary criticism at university, so I have developed a preference and custom of delving into the details. The book is mostly an observation of details and I took great interest in writing about them. Reading it can still remind me of how pleasant it was to write it.

Education has been a focus of my research on culture. The education systems for universities, secondary schools and elementary schools provide the main channels for cultural production and inheritance in a society. Schools are fully cultural and often initiate cultural changes. However, besides being cultural, education facilitates the selection of the elites and the mobility of social strata and contributes to the vitality and health of the social structure and political framework and to social fairness and justice, so education is political. Education is so important that scholars from all fields need to study it from their own perspectives.

My rural mother was surprised when I left the Beijing-based Central Party School, for which I was working, for Fengning County, Hebei Province, to carry out research on elementary schools, asking, "Are elementary schools also the concern of the Central Party School?" The Central Party School of the Communist Party of China is tasked with training Party officials and conducting social scientific research and has the academic tradition of making field investigations of major issues in present-day China.

In this book, my focus is on two aspects of rural education in China. One is classroom instruction in elementary schools and the other is college entrance examinations for senior secondary schools. The former trains people while the latter selects them. I work to go into details concerning these aspects and keep true to specific issues. Fengning County, an ethnic minority region in the North, has historically been a culturally edge in China, and I choose a rural elementary school as contrast in China's cultural center Qufu, Confucius' home town. The school is located where Confucius was born. I also observe several schools in today's China from the point of view of the country's modern education history and its process of modernization. I want to understand some little things from a grand perspective.

In my book, I use an anthropological approach, which helps a lot. Anthropology may be the closest to literature which I majored, and I have a long passion for it. As anthropology is about people and how they live, it keeps academic research from being divorced from the life of people and is quite fascinating. Having temporarily left my academic post, I am now engaged in practical work for communication purposes, but I continue to make an anthropological observation about work and life. This adds to the meaning of my work.

Reading this book again, I have been inspired to attempt more academic research: publishing my northern book's southern sequel based on research on rural schools in Fujian Province where I am working.

I would like especially thank Mr. Wu Hao for helping publish this English version. I also want to thank Mr. Tong Xiaohua for translating the book. I have never met Mr. Tong before, but I have long admired him for his talent and spirit. Thanks should also go to the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press and Springer, reliable bridges between Chinese and international academia.

November 12, 2015 Shulei Li

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Chapter 1
The "State" in a Village

The Fengning Manchu Ethnic Autonomous County Hope Elementary School (Fengning Hope Elementary School) is the only place in Humaying Township that displays the county seal. In 1991, news of the Hope Project reached this county that is out of the way even though it's not remote, after which county leaders established the school in conjunction with the Communist Youth League provincial committee. Fengning County covers an area of 8765 km^2, equivalent to a small European country, but it is one of the poorest counties in China, and its fiscal revenues amounted to only 17,466 million *yuan* in 1990. Even though that's 105.56 times its revenues in 1952,[1] it's a negligible sum compared to developed areas of China. The county's budget was scarcely enough to cover mandated expenditures and there was no money for new projects, so any new education initiatives would require outside financing. There were a lot of counties in these circumstances in North China, and because of their difficult circumstances they could not have an outward-oriented economy, but had to have an outward-oriented fiscal policy of seeking assistance from the central government and developed regions. Strictly speaking, the central government and developed regions were indebted to Fengning County because it provided them with ecological and mineral resources at either no or very low cost. Fengning County has vast grasslands, and gold, silver, platinum and iron resources. It is of great importance to Beijing and Tianjin, the two largest cities in North China because the source of Beijing's drinking water is in Halahai Bend Village, Huangqi Town, Fengning County, and the source of the Luan River, called the "lifeblood of Tianjin," is also in Fengning County. In addition, the water volume of the Mangniu River increases considerably as it passes through the county. However, for a long time Beijing and Tianjin did not pay Fengning County anything for the water they received from it, and the only

[1]Fengning Manchu Ethnic Autonomous County Education Committee Education Annals Compilation Committee (1994), p. 7.

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fiscal assistance it received was no-interest poverty alleviation loans from the central government. All that time, representatives of Fengning County were going everywhere begging for handouts to build roads, factories and schools. It was only when Fengning County was paired with the State Planning Commission in the one-to-one poverty alleviation assistance program that the situation changed greatly. In just four years (1996–1999) the State Planning Commission built 19 Hope Elementary Schools in Fengning County, spending 150,000–800,000 *yuan* per school. By contrast, in 1991 when county officials were able to round up 350,000 *yuan* after making the rounds to build just one elementary school, they were pleased with their accomplishment. The county built that school in Humaying Village, Humaying Township, 30 km from the county seat. It was the first elementary school in the county to bear the county’s name and display the county seal, as if it were directly administered by the county government. By June 1999, there were 53 Hope Schools in Fengning County built from donations by individuals and organizations all over China (including from within Fengning County itself). The one in Humaying Village is not the largest or the most beautiful, but whenever people come from outside to see the county’s Hope Schools, the Fengning County Party Committee always brings them here, which is a reflection of their pride in it as the county’s first Hope School.

I first came to Fengning County on June 23, 1999. Even though it was an impoverished mountain area and a Manchu ethnic autonomous area, it had contributed as much to the creation of the New China as any county in the country. The county’s major government departments, bureaus and commissions, and public security, procuratorial and judicial departments and courts all had everything they needed. If there was any difference between it and other counties, it was that the hand of the state was a little heavier because there was a big military presence in the county. When China’s relations with the Soviet Union turned sour in the early 1960s, Fengning County was on the front lines of a hypothetical war between the two, and a large garrison was established there. A large military compound was built on the main street of the county seat, and military slogans were written in large characters on its high walls, and even the biggest hotel in town proudly hung a message of congratulations on the tenth anniversary of the founding of the autonomous county on the wall of its entrance hall. Strolling the city streets at night, one frequently came across neon patriotic slogans such as “Make Fengning green” and “Protect Beijing and Tianjin,” which strongly gave the local people a sense of identification with and subordination to the country’s political center. The county seat of Fengning County is Dage, which is 188 km north of Beijing. For most of that distance there is only a two-lane mountain road, and it’s a five-hour ride by bus or a three-hour trip by car. So it takes ordinary people five hours but officials only three hours to reach Beijing; however, everyone says the road is in very good condition. It is a narrow winding road, but it was well built and is well maintained. The road surface is smooth and signs periodically proclaim it to be a “model road,” which testifies that there are no transportation obstacles between this county deep in the mountains and the seat of national power. Fengning County is intimately integrated into the system of state power through telecommunications

and the national media, and long-distance direct dial telephone lines and television satellite dishes are now already common. As a Hebei county close to Beijing, considerable political influence radiates to it from both national and provincial capitals.

Fengning County's education network has been built up against this backdrop. It has 284 elementary schools, 32 junior high schools, three schools that serve grades 1–9, and three senior high schools that altogether have 3821 teachers and serve 63,361 students.[2] The senior high schools are in the county seat and two relatively prosperous towns, and all the towns and townships have at least one junior high school (most townships have only one), which are called town or township junior high schools. All the villages have elementary schools, which are called village schools. The three levels of schools (senior high, junior high and elementary) roughly match the three political divisions (county, town or township, and village). From the political perspective, county and township belong to the "people's government" system. All their offices are state offices and their leaders and key employees are all state cadres. By contrast, villages belong to the system of autonomous local areas, and the heads of village committees and the Party branch secretary are all local residents who are not part of the state cadre system. All three levels of schools are part of the state system. Even though the three levels of schools are operated and managed separately in name, and village elementary schools should fall under village management, in fact their principals are all state cadres who are appointed by offices under the state Ministry of Education, and the schools curriculums and course materials are all specified by the Ministry of Education. All the village is responsible for is building and maintaining the school and buying furnishings and supplies, and it has no authority over personnel, teaching or school management. In Fengning County, the county has an education office, and towns and townships have central schools. Their central schools aren't genuine schools, but rather township-level education administrative offices, and their principals have the administrative rank of vice section leader. They are appointed by the county education office and exercise authority over all the township's schools. Central schools have the power to appoint and dismiss elementary school principals (the county education office has the power to appoint and dismiss township central school principals), transfer teachers and oversee education. A number of township central schools together comprise a school district, which has a main school. School districts and main schools are not official administrative bodies, but rather are ad hoc composites created for convenience and do not have any formal administrative functions. The position of principal of a main school is held concurrently by the principal of the central school of the district in which it is located and the principal's rank is equal to that of the central school principal. In fact, every township central school is directly subordinate to the county education office.

[2]Fengning Manchu Ethnic Autonomous County Education Bureau, typescript of Education Work Report, May 15, 1999, p. 1.

Fengning County does something that very many Chinese counties do not do—it pays all the county's full-time teachers directly from the county treasury, and their salaries are issued by the county education office. In the early 1990s, all of China's provinces carried out the reform of county and township finances under which their finances were separated and each was responsible to balance its own budget. Under this system, townships were responsible for coming up with the funds to pay the salaries of teachers at and below the township level. Township finances are naturally more precarious than county finances are, so townships pay teachers late more often than counties do. Fengning County also implemented the reform, but applied it only to government employees, not teachers, in order to guarantee that teachers get paid on time and highlight the status of teachers as state employees. All eleven teachers at the Fengning Manchu Autonomous County Hope School in Humaying are regular teachers. Accredited teachers have the status of state cadres, and the locals call them "state teachers" or "public teachers," and they are distinguished from non-accredited local teachers or acting teachers. In the 1970s, most teachers below the county level were non-accredited teachers. In 1979, Fengning County had 1900 teachers, 1042 of whom were non-accredited, and in 1979 it had 3597 teachers, 2422 of whom were non-accredited.[3] Beginning in the 1980s, the proportion of non-accredited teachers gradually declined, and in 1990, only 329 out of 2667 full-time teachers were non-accredited,[4] and at present there are only three in the whole county. Much of the attrition of non-accredited teachers is attributed to them getting older and retiring, but also to the county carrying out large-scale testing and formal training of non-accredited teachers at teachers colleges so they could become accredited. Fengning County continued to hire acting teachers on a temporary basis when it stopped hiring non-accredited teachers and couldn't recruit enough accredited teachers. The number of acting teachers was not large and most of them were assigned to elementary schools in remote areas. However, this year, the Fengning County Education Office decided to completely eliminate acting teachers in the next two or three years on the basis of instructions from higher authorities because more and more Fengning natives are willing to go back and teach after they graduate from teachers colleges so the county does not now face a teacher shortage. At that time, the county will apply to have its teaching staff designated as meeting uniform national standards, and its elementary school staff is now approaching those standards.

In terms of organization and function, elementary schools are state agencies that reach down to the village level. This coincides with the judgment the Marxist theorist Louis Althusser made that Education is a kind of state apparatus.[5] Elementary schools are the only state agencies in villages, and they make a unique contribution to the environment and atmosphere of their village. They deeply

[3]Fengning Manchu Ethnic Autonomous County Education Committee Education Annals Compilation Committee (1994), pp. 983–984.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Blackledge et al. (1985).

interact with their village. Their function has changed over many decades, and they now have a unique cultural and historical significance. From this perspective, the Fengning Hope Elementary School is very interesting.

Fengning Hope Elementary School is situated in the natural village of Beidaochi in the administrative village of Humaying. Beidaochi is only 1 km from the natural village of Humaying where the village Communist Party committee is located, and between the two there is a centuries-old willow tree whose trunk has a circumference of several arm spans. Humaying’s original elementary school was in the natural village of Humaying, but when the Hope School was built, a new road was built to Beidaochi and the school was built next to it. When it was built, the school was given the county’s name in honor of being its first Hope School. After the school was built, it became an economic magnet for Beidaochi, which originally had only three families, and the Hope Restaurant and Hope General Store opened just outside its main gate. These businesses not only took their name from the school but also relied on it for their business. Humaying Township was formed from the merger of Tahuangqi Township and Houying Township. In a gesture of impartiality, it took its name from Humaying Village which was 3 km from Tahuangqi. Even though the new township took its name from Humaying Village, the township government remained in Tahuangqi, and it didn’t move to Humaying Village till after the Hope School was built, thereby reconciling the reality with the name. The credit union that was also originally in Tahuangqi moved to Humaying soon after the government did, but it kept the name Tahuangqi Credit Union to maintain continuity in its banking operations. It is a jarring sight to see the name Tahuangqi Credit Union written prominently over the door of a building on Humaying’s main street. When strangers come to town and see the names Humaying, Beidaochi, Tahuangqi and Fengning on buildings on the main street, it makes them wonder where they are.

Even though the township government is located in Humaying Village, it is not a village agency; the village is just one of 16 administrative villages under its jurisdiction. Humaying Township is one of largest and most favorably located townships in Fengning County. The county offices are a two-story building because the government leaders had the nerve to overspend on office construction. Humingying Village is small, and the Hope Elementary School abuts the county office building. The government building’s rear wall forms a part of the schools front campus wall. The school’s entrance is at the rear of the government building to the right, and there is a wide roadway from the street to the entrance. The school building is smaller than the government building, but the school grounds are larger than and cleaner and more orderly than the government building’s. The atmosphere of the township government is very homey and natural and seems very much like a rural home. In the courtyard, there is a circular garden patch surrounded by a low brick wall in which eggplants, cucumbers and green beans are grown. The garden takes up more than half the courtyard and gives it a lived-in look. In hot weather, when the government employees get off work, they often set up a long table where they eat and then drink and chat well into the evening. The government compound doesn’t have a gatehouse, and next to the gate where a gatehouse would be, there

is a lavatory that passersby in the street often come in and use much to the consternation of the mayor Li Bocong. One day I saw him near the gate in a bad mood looking left and right, and when I asked him what he was doing, he said he wanted to move the lavatory to another place to keep passersby from taking a shit at the gate of the government compound. There is no light in the lavatory. If you go in at night you have to feel your way, and if you go in during the day you can see flies and maggots in the dim light. It’s pretty creepy till you get used to it. Although the lavatory makes the government seem somewhat less imposing, it gives the people a sense of having something in common with it.

In some respects, the Fengning Elementary School seems more like a government that the government does. The school’s name plaque has its name in both the Chinese and Manchu languages the same way county-level offices do. When you pass through the gate you enter a large playground. The ground in front of the building is paved with red bricks and Young Pioneers are holding up star and torch sculptures. There is a very neat brick flowerbed in front of the building whose gorgeous flowers are in full bloom. This is the result of the effort to plant flower gardens in all schools. Of course, there is also a vegetable garden and lavatory on the grounds. The lavatory is divided into four sections for boys and girls and for male and female teachers. The boys and male teachers lavatories are very clean and orderly without any insects. When the bell rings, the students line up on the playground with military precision. The walls of the playground are completely covered with posters that fill your eyes with the country’s dominant ideological themes that the students read the text out loud in unison in voices so loud it hurts your ears but brings the words to life. Looking out from the playground, one can see a bald mountain not far off in the distance and much nearer there is a decrepit farmhouse. This view makes you feel that the school is an island of civilization placed in the wilds. It is a factory for cultivating skilled people for the state and also a miniature image of the state. It is interesting that the atmosphere of the state is more pervasive in the elementary school than the local government, which is an administrative agency of the state, because the education system more effectively organizes its methods, education professionals have purer convictions and stricter standards of behavior, the school is somewhat separated from village life.

The arrangement of the classrooms and the posters on the walls also reveal a clear purpose. For several years, the fifth grade classroom in Fengning Elementary School has always been arranged very orderly, and most of the posters on the wall are pictures of famous people, with their names and identity written below, as well as a famous quotation of theirs. There are two kinds of pictures: one kind is people who made important scientific or cultural accomplishments, and the other kind is model heroes. The former group includes Marie Curie, Alfred Nobel, Lu Xun and Confucius, and the latter group includes Dong Cunrui and others. Alfred Nobel is identified as a Swedish chemist, and his quote is “Life is a polished gemstone given to humanity by nature.” Marie Curie is identified as Polish-French physicist, and her quotation is “We should have perseverance, and we need to have confidence.” Lu Xun is identified as a modern writer, thinker and revolutionary, and his quotation is “Fierce-browed, I coolly defy a thousand pointing fingers. Head

bowed, like a willing ox I serve the children." Confucius is identified as an ancient thinker, statesman, educator and founder of Chinese philosophy, and his quotation is "Study with constant perseverance and application. Look back on the old if you want to learn the new." Dong Cunrui is identified as a hero of the People's Liberation Army, and his quotation is "The Party gave us the most glorious mission, and we will complete it even if the heavens come crashing down." These pictures were all selected by the education authorities to be hung on classroom walls to give students examples to emulate in their lives, and their quotations articulate norms for students to follow in their behavior. I asked the third-grade teacher if the students ask who these people are. She said, "There is no need for them to ask. I've told them about all these famous people, and they all know who they are." In the second-grade classroom, the pictures of Alfred Nobel and Dong Cunrui are hung together. The first is a Westerner who invented dynamite, and the latter is a Chinese soldier who sacrificed his life in battle using dynamite. Surprisingly however, Alfred Nobel often talked about life as a precious treasure. People are often amazed to see these two pictures hanging together, but these two men both are models for students designated by the Chinese government on the basis of its own internal requirements. China needs to modernize, so it must motivate students to esteem science, use the examples of great scientists as a resource to enrich students' education, and inspire and encourage them to become great scientists themselves. So it is only natural that a picture of Alfred Nobel who was not only a scientist but who also endowed the Nobel Prizes which are the symbol of the peak of scientific accomplishment should be hung on the walls of elementary schools in the Chinese countryside. At the same time, the Chinese government has to pursue political stability and strengthen its ruling position, so a picture of Dong Cunrui, who represents loyalty and self-sacrifice is also needed on classroom walls. In general, in remote villages, the great people who are held up to students to admire and emulate are far removed in both time and place from the world the students live in, and the more these great people are shrouded in a mysterious and otherworldly glow, the more power they have to affect students' spirits.

I read the lesson plan of Li Guijin, a junior-high teacher in Fengning, made for teaching the essay "Discussing 'Basic Truth.'" The lesson plan includes this passage, "Why is this essay written so well? Because the author is Lü Shuxiang, a famous contemporary linguist and the former head of the Institute of Languages of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences."[6] This teaching plan was included as a model in the *Fengning Manchu Ethnic Autonomous County Annals*. This lesson plan states that the fact that its author was famous is alone sufficient to explain that the essay was well written. This illustrates the great reverence people in remote areas have for people who are famous. Therefore, the state uses the portraits of famous people hung on the walls of rural elementary schools to create an atmosphere to express and achieve its purposes. These portraits play the role of guiding

[6]Fengning Manchu Ethnic Autonomous County Education Committee Education Annals Compilation Committee (1991), p. 91.

students and setting an example for them. In addition, the teaching that goes on in the classroom every day also manifests the dual objectives of education—intellectual and moral guidance—and confirms that schools have the nature of state-operated talent factories. The blackboard in every classroom of Fengning Elementary School has a Chinese flag embedded in it, underlining this fact.

In fact, from the very beginning, China's new kind of schools were intimately related to the conception and substance of a nation state. In 1905, the closure of imperial schools and opening of new schools was in response to the spread of the conception of a nation state and the desperate situation the country was in, and the new schools were a result of the country's awakening. In the next several decades, China's schools not only trained people with modern skills for the country, but also used its distinctive and powerful system of symbols—school uniforms, solemn campuses and stirring school songs—to manifest the will and image of the state. Countless documents pertaining to the history of education in China testify to this fact. Tao Xingzhi, a renowned Chinese educator, stated that the purpose of the "new education" was to build the country. He said, "We are now in the new world of the 20th century, and we should build a new country, a republican country that is rich and powerful."[7] Ren Tongjun, an ordinary elementary school teacher, described the graduation ceremony at her elementary school in 1915 in which the girls performed a play in which Chinese female heroes from across the ages united to defeat the imperialist powers and save China.[8] In 1919 in schools across the country including upper elementary schools in most counties in Shandong Province, students sang songs of national salvation en masse, with lyrics that extolled China's ancient civilization and lamented the country's demise.[9] On the country's borders such as in Dali, Yunnan, the students at the Xizhou Elementary School were proudest when they sang and marched wearing their school uniforms.[10] Fengning County in northern Hebei, where "there were many mountains and few roads, the economy lagged behind and culture was late in coming,"[11] was no exception. In the early years of the Republic of China when the whole country was building schools and encouraging young people to learn, it consciously or unconsciously joined in this country-wide trend. The 1932 edition of the *Fengning Manchu Ethnic Autonomous County Annals* published the article "Announcing a People's Book for the Literacy Campaign" written by Fengning County Literacy Movement Publicity Committee.[12] This article was written in a way to further the purposes of the campaign because it was written is a simple and sincere style. Its entire text is reprinted here:

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[7]Tao Xingzhi. "New education." Tao Xingzhi Research Association (1986), p. 7.

[8]Ren (1989), p.15.

[9]Tao (1987), p. 67.

[10]Du (1997), p. 65.

[11]Fengning Manchu Ethnic Autonomous County Education Committee Education Annals Compilation Committee (1991), p. 1.

[12]Ibid, p. 115.

Announcing a People’s Book for the Literacy Campaign

To young and old, men and women, boys and girls: At present, our country is in a desperate crisis. All of you are suffering more than you can bear, and every day is filled with great hardship. In this situation, you should consider why our country is in this hopeless predicament. Why is your suffering so great? Why are your days filled with such hardship? The reason for this situation is probably within China itself. Perhaps only a small minority of people know the true reason. Probably 80–90 % of the people don’t know. I will now tell everyone the reason. It is because most people are illiterate. If all of you were literate, our country could immediately dispel the dangers and make our country safe, your suffering would be greatly reduced, and your lives would immediately become happy. Look at the great advantages of being literate. Don’t think I’m talking empty talk. What I’m saying is true. Let me give you an example. At present, our three provinces in the northeast are occupied by troops sent there by the Japanese imperialists, and they are killing our compatriots there. This is an enormous humiliation for all our country’s people. The whole of Japan is smaller than China’s largest province, and Japan’s population is less than one tenth of China’s. How can such a small country get away with sending troops to bully such a large country as the Republic of China? What’s the reason for this? The reason is that most Japanese are literate and their skills level is high, and so the country is powerful. A detailed survey reveals that 80 % of Japanese are literate, whereas 80 % of Chinese are illiterate, exactly opposite proportions. No wonder that Japan is so strong and China is so weak. Whenever a country is weak, its people will suffer, and if you want to make the country strong, its people must become literate. This is why our country has established people’s schools. It won’t cost you a cent. You can go to a school where you live and become literate for free. What could be easier than that? Perhaps you don’t know the advantages of being literate and the disadvantages of being illiterate. That’s why I wrote this article—to tell you in detail the advantages and disadvantages are perfectly clear. I hope all of you immediately enroll in school and learn to read.

Consciousness of the state in education and the national nature of education have permeated education in the whole country as well as Fengning from the time of the Republic of China to the present day. This situation has been of great benefit for the Fengning Hope Elementary School that we visited.

Village elementary schools are the primary manifestation of the state in villages, and they exert their influence in their localities in their own way. From the time the CPC took power in the country till the late 1970s, village schools not only carried out their teaching functions in the classroom but also played a role in society. They were the primary publicity team for all kinds of political movements and the vanguard in all kinds of production projects. Just after Fengning was liberated in 1948, the recently established Feng-Luan Unified Government issued the directive, “Elementary school teachers should understand the scope of their work, which is not only to teach their students to read, but also assist village cadres in their work, such as writing posters, placing public address systems on rooftops and writing blackboard newspapers.”[13] In 1948 alone, schools throughout Fengning County wrote 279 editions of blackboard newspapers, and set up rooftop public address systems in 71 administrative villages.[14] This kind of activity was common

[13]Fengning Manchu Ethnic Autonomous County Education Committee Education Annals Compilation Committee (1991), p. 250.

[14]Ibid.

throughout the country till after the Cultural Revolution. I attended elementary school in Yuanyang County, Henan Province, during the latter stage of the Cultural Revolution. That was a time of mass struggle meetings at which people shouted slogans and took the stage to give speeches as new political movements constantly arose. Students would gather together each with a small flag and March around the village streets shouting "Strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat!" "Resolutely suppress counterrevolutionaries!" and such slogans. At that time, schools' Mao Zedong Thought Art and Publicity Teams would put on performances for the village residents at Spring Festival and other occasions. This would not only satisfy the villagers demand for entertainment but also spread mainstream official ideology. During major projects such as the movement to emulate Dazhai County, level the land and dredge river channels, students joined in the work and served as cheerleaders. In Humaying Village, when I was chatting with 41-year-old Sun Yazhong, secretary of the village Party branch, he could clearly remember that when he was in elementary and secondary school his whole class joined in harvesting wheat and participated in criticism meetings. However, things are very different now: there is no longer a constant succession of political movements; the land is cultivated under the farmer contract system; bridges and roads are repaired by professional construction companies, and teachers and students are no longer pulled out of their classrooms to participate in political movements or collective work. Nowadays, schools put all their effort into educating their students, and they now function as the apparatus of national culture on school campuses. Not a single one of the teachers at Fengning Hope Elementary School is a native of Fengning County, and their work relations are confined to their students and do not extend to the village population at large. When the school doors close in the morning, the school is totally self-contained. Three unmarried female teachers live on campus and share an apartment, and every day after classes they chat and watch television together and prepare the next day's classes. They don't have any friends in the village and rarely leave the campus. The campus has visible and invisible walls, and it stands between the homes in the village and the farmers' fields. It is in the village and was placed there to serve the village, but it is not truly a part of the village. When the villagers walk past it they look at its beautiful building and the national flag raised high on the flagpole with a gaze that views it as both familiar and distant, and as strange yet compelling. The school's flag is the only one in town. Not even the village government flies one.

The Fengning Elementary School raises the flag in the morning and lowers it at night, and it has a flag raising ceremony every Monday morning at 7:00. I attended the flag raising ceremony on the morning of June 28. The flagpole and its platform were very well constructed. All the faculty and students stood solemnly facing the flagpole. At 7:00 sharp, the flag team composed of students in higher grades mounted the platform and raised the flag. As the flag was being raised, all the students joined the flag team in saluting the flag, and after it was raised, all the students sang the national anthem together. When I heard the words, "At the moment the Chinese nation faces the greatest danger" I noticed that many of the students sang "at the time" instead of "at the moment." The lowering of the flag is carried

out very simply and naturally. After the national anthem was finished, the students all raised their right hand as swore an oath to the flag, “We will love our country and homeland. We will be civilized and courteous, seek truth and be innovative. We will respect our teachers and unite with our classmates. We will study hard and advance every day. We will always be prepared.” After the oath was finished, the student who was in charge of the ceremony that day said, “The principal will now speak.” Then Wang Suyun, the principal of Fengning Hope Elementary School, mounted the platform and spoke to the students in a loud voice without a microphone. This is what she said:

> I have just a few things to say. The first concerns keeping the environment clean. Some of you students still throw snack wrappers anywhere you please. When you finish your snack, put the wrapper in your pocket. Don’t just throw it away. Do you remember that? (The students answered, “We remember.”) If you continue to do so, we’ll stop selling snacks, and if you’re hungry, you’ll just have to go hungry. Next, I want to talk about noon naps. Last Thursday I went around to the classrooms at noon nap time, and in some classrooms ten or more students were missing. Most of them were out strolling the village streets. After lunch, you must take a noon nap. Do you remember that? (The students answered, “We remember.”) I think you do. At noon, I want you to go to every classroom and count the students. If a student is missing, he or she will be given five demerits. The students who walk to school can go home for lunch, but they should be back here a little after 1:00. I want you to check the classrooms at 1:10. If someone isn’t back by then the first time they’ll be given demerits; the second time, they’ll be made to stand out in the hall. Next, when you fifth grade students are reciting your lessons, don’t do it in the hallways. Go outside because the people in the office can hear you and it disturbs their work. Next, we’ve already started end-of-term review work. Make the most of the time. You especially need to study the units on society and nature. Don’t put it off. I’ve noticed some students studying while they walk. Everyone should follow their example. You don’t have to study while you’re walking, but you should start studying as soon as you get home. You can learn most of your lessons if you make an effort. But math is different. With math, if you don’t understand it, you don’t understand it. Final exams start in ten days. You need to make the most of your time, and learn the things you haven’t learned yet. Some of you first and second graders have learned all your lessons. You third and fourth graders need to work on the units on society and nature. Can you remember that? (Students, “We remember.”)

After Wang Suyun finished, the next to speak was Sun Yanlian, the fifth grade teacher who was the duty teacher that week. She didn’t mount the flag platform and she didn’t speak very long. She said: “Pay attention to two things. Maintain discipline. Pay attention to cleanliness. Most of you students wash your hands, feet and face. Don’t let your necks look like car axels. Wash them at noon or at night. Scrub them. Don’t let your skin turn black and don’t stink up the room. You need to take a noon nap. You have to be back here to rest by 1:10. If you rest well, you can study well. Don’t look at taking a nap as pressure we put on you. Don’t go out and walk the streets after lunch. There’s nothing to do out there.”

This was the whole of the Fengning Hope Elementary School flag-raising ceremony. The most sacred worship of the motherland and the most trivial campus management were combined together. The formality of a state function and the casualness of a rural family gathering were mixed together. This is probably the true face of the “state” in a rural elementary school.

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Chapter 2
Teachers

The Fengning Hope Elementary School has eleven teachers, ten of whom are women. It can be said that all 271 students in the school's eight classes are in the hands of women. Seven of them are classroom homeroom teachers, one is the principal, one teaches art and music to all the classes and one teaches sports and advanced English. The only male teacher is Liu Zhanyou. He's not a head teacher. He's the fourth and fifth grade natural science teacher. He serves as head of instruction but doesn't have a formal appointment. He's 40 years old and has a thin dark face. He doesn't say much, and speaks in a low voice. When he's together with all his female colleagues who have higher pitched voices, he appears to be the most gentle. He shares an office with the principal Wang Suyun. When Wang Suyun gets a phone call and chats and laughs, Liu Zhanyou sits quietly at his desk listening to her conversation, and occasionally interjects a comment. Anyone who talks with him quickly discovers he knows what's what and is more intelligent than he lets on. He has a deep understanding of the local political and economic situation, and if you ask him anything about it he can give you a detailed answer, but if you don't ask he doesn't offer any information. Once at a dinner discussion about the local gold mine and water pollution, he gave a detailed explanation of how to dispose of mine tailings, and he told me about conditions at the nearby goldmine and coalmine. His female colleagues don't have that kind of broad interest and knowledge about matters that don't concern them directly. As an elementary school teacher, he isn't very active in local affairs, but he's a person who wants to do something meaningful. He's quietly observant of everything around him and understands a lot while saying little. He's a very knowledgeable person. He's a typical village intellectual who doesn't get involved in village affairs. He's somewhat lonely and is a bit conceited in a way few people notice, and he sometimes abruptly says something that makes people think he's straightforward. Unfortunately, people like him are not encouraged by the school system now in effect. He can't make any use of much of what he knows in the courses he teaches. The natural science

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courses he teaches in the elementary school are not the most important classes there, and he is not expert in carrying out standardized experiments that science classes require. Because he is the only man on the faculty, he teaches the once-a-week labor technology class. I think this class makes better use of his skills. He was originally the head of instruction at Tahuangqi Experimental Elementary School, and I saw a picture of him leading teachers in preparing their lesson plans on the office wall there. I don't know why he didn't retain his title of head of instruction when he was transferred to the Fengning Elementary School. He was originally a non-accredited teacher, but subsequently received teacher training and became accredited.

These eleven teachers can be divided into two groups on the basis of how they received their teaching credentials. The first group was originally non-accredited teachers who were accredited after receiving teacher training and passing a test. The second group was assigned to teach here when they graduated from teacher training high schools or junior colleges. The first group includes Wang Suyun, the principal and teacher of fourth hand fifth grade social science; Liu Zhanyou, acting head of instruction and teacher of fourth and fifth grade natural science and labor technology; Sun Yanlian, the homeroom teacher of fifth grade class one and fifth grade math teacher; and Li Jianhua, homeroom teacher of fifth grade class two and fifth grade Chinese language teacher. These teachers occupy all the schools administrative positions and do all the teaching and student supervision in the higher grades. It is clear that all the power in the school resides with them. All these teachers are in their 40s and 50s, and there is an age gap between them and the younger teachers. Liu Zhanyou looks like he's getting old and becoming sluggish, but the three women are still very vigorous and assertive, and are quick-witted and decisive, but when I listened to Wang Suyun and Sun Yanlian speak at the flag-raising ceremony I saw they could be strict while still being fair and reasonable. Compared to the young teachers who came right from teachers schools, they clearly have more experience and are more down to earth, so they have more power in the village environment.

Six of the remaining seven teachers graduated from teacher training high schools not far from Fengning: Chengde Teachers School, Pingquan Teachers School or Luanping Teachers School. They entered these schools after finishing junior high and graduated after three years. Most such schools are city-level schools, and their graduates are not eligible to take the college entrance exam. Every year the city education office gives these schools a quota of how many students they can enroll from all the counties under its jurisdiction. In 1999, the Chengde Teachers School enrolled 39 students from Fengning County. Fengning County is divided into high elevation, mid-level elevation and low elevation parts. Its high elevation parts are part of the Mongolian Plains, and they are the poorest and most culturally backward part of the Mongolian Plains. For many years, Fengning County has specified that all its graduates from such teachers schools would be assigned to teach in a poor high-elevation community for a number of years, but later it discovered that many of them didn't want to go there and couldn't adapt to the environment, with the result that they didn't teach very

effectively. So the county changed the system in 1993 and decreed that a certain portion of the county's quota would be reserved for students from high elevation communities, and only those students would be required to return to a high-elevation community to teach. This greatly increased the retention rate. All six of Fengning Hope Elementary School's six teachers who graduated from teacher training high schools graduated after 1993, but they all received formal professional education there. In addition, they are all around 20 years old and they dress in the Western style prevalent in the cities. In their interactions with others, they still have the manner of students, and when they teach class they should be a little more formal. He Ping, the fourth-grade homeroom teacher, wears very thick-soled shoes popular with Japanese girls that seem a bit out of place but everyone has grown used to them.

The only teacher at Fengning Hope Elementary School who graduated from junior college is Bao Shuxia. She graduated from the Agricultural University of Hebei, and when she graduated she was assigned to the Fengning Animal Husbandry Bureau; it sent her to the Humaying Township Veterinary Station, which is an institution that is responsible for its own profits or losses, and it couldn't afford to pay her salary. Out of exasperation she took a leave of absence and went to Beijing, where her husband, who is a soldier, was stationed. So, losing her job solved their problem of being separated. She worked in a company for over a year but she felt there wasn't any future in it, so she returned to Fengning and looked for a chance to go into teaching. Teachers always got paid on time, and at that time many companies and institutions often paid their employees late, so this was a big selling point for her. In the past, teachers weren't allowed to leave the profession, but now people without teacher training aren't allowed to enter it. An exception was made for her so that she could become a teacher. She was hired at Fengning Elementary School on a temporary basis, and was told she could go to Humaying High School the next semester. She had the highest level of education of any teacher at Fengning Elementary School, but she taught the two least important classes—sports and English. Originally, the school didn't teach English, but some parents were worried that their children would be at a disadvantage when they went to junior high. This was a common problem for children in village elementary schools. So many parents asked the school to teach some English to give them a foundation. When Bao Shuxia came along, she was given this assignment. She took the assignment very seriously. She told me that either English shouldn't be taught in elementary school, or the school should get a good teacher to teach it. Elementary school students are at an age when their ability to imitate is the strongest, and if their teacher's pronunciation is bad, they'll learn her bad example and never be able to correct it. She also threw herself into teaching sports. She taught her students Tai Chi, and I watched her third-grade students practice it. They really got into it. There are no trees or shade on the playground, and after all the time she spends out there teaching sports, she's become the most suntanned person in the school. This Westernized young teacher is even more suntanned than the principal, who grew up in a village. Going to Beijing and struggling to make a living away from home put a great strain on her that you can see it in her face, and you can

occasionally see bitterness in her eyes over her fate of having to settle for this rural life after graduating from college. However, when she stands in front of a class and speaks English in a high-pitched teacher voice, there is no sign on her face of the hardships she has endured. Her expression is relaxed and her bearing is graceful, and the corners of her eyes reflect a kindness and severity beyond her years. I sat in the last row listening to her teach class. I was surprised she had so much energy, and I couldn't help thinking that she really found herself when she became a teacher.

After the flag-raising ceremony on June 28, I bumped into Bao Shuxia's husband, Li Xijun. He is a cheerful young man, and he was here on his annual home leave from the army. He is from Humaying, and after he graduated from junior high school, he went to Zhailing Senior High School. He joined the army during his first year. In the army he was sent to Baoding Military Academy to learn to be a wireless radio operator, and after he graduated he was stationed in Beijing. The year he joined the army, he was one of 14 boys from Humaying Township to join up. He and two others passed the exam to go to military school. One of them went to the PLA Chongqing Telecommunications Academy and the other went to the PLA Xi'an Telecommunications Academy. Only three other of his high school classmates got further education after they graduated. One each went to Beijing Agricultural University, Hebei Forestry College and Hebei Normal University. All three of them studied fields related to agriculture, but the three who joined the army and went to military school all studied technical fields. The army greatly changes the lifestyle of rural boys who join up. After all these years, Li Xijun wants to leave the army and return to Fengning, but he will probably face the same difficulties Bao Shuxia did in choosing a career. It might not be that difficult, but Li Xijun isn't worried. He says that the best thing the army did for him is to toughen his will so that he can deal with anything that comes his way. A scholar like Bao Shuxia and a soldier like Li Xijun make a well-matched couple.

At Fengning Elementary School, power is in the hands of local people who started out as non-accredited teachers. In recent years, rural schools and their staffs have constantly become more standardized and professional, and Westernized teachers have gradually become indispensible. Only teachers who went to college can teach courses such as English. It's not possible for a teacher to be able to fulfill the requirements for teaching music and art or early childhood education without having gone to college. In the past, music class in rural elementary schools was limited to a teacher leading the students in singing songs. The Fengning Elementary School music teacher Nie Haiyan teaches her students music theory and teaches them to play instruments. When I attended one of her classes, she sat in front of an electric piano and sang while she played the keys to teach her students vocalization and scales, and then they sang a song. It seemed like a private tutor for a Western noble family had come to a rural elementary school. Nie Haiyan also teaches art. Every classroom has a place in the back of the room to display students' artwork. Of course, none of the artwork is particularly good, but most of it shows a grasp of basic principles, and its quality is not much different from that of urban students. I talked with Wang Chunlei, the third-grade class

leader, and he said he wants to be an artist. Wu Xiaoming, from Class 2 of the fifth grade, wrote an essay entitled "My Good Friend," in which he wrote that his school classmate Wang Baishi wants to be a well-known painter. He wrote, "He has a brush in his hands all day and is never happy if he isn't painting." I was interested to learn that many students in the school want to be artists when they grow up. I've visited many rural elementary schools, and in my experience, art class is considered to be less important than music class; schools view it as just a hobby and don't teach it. In my opinion, art class is a luxury that urban elementary students can enjoy, but it's hard enough for rural schools to teach all the basic courses well. That Fengning Elementary School can teach art class so well that students want to be artists when they grow up is a very welcome trend in rural education. The success of the art class at Fengning Elementary School is a seemingly small phenomenon, but from it we can see how much the quality of education and the ability of teachers have changed in rural elementary education. This is probably attributable to the steady influx of Westernized professional teachers, even though most of them are from rural villages and towns themselves. I asked Wang Chunlei why so many students wanted to be artists when there were so many other professions to choose from. She couldn't come up with an answer for a long time before she said maybe it was because artists could make a great contribution to the country. This seemed to me to be a little farfetched. Looking at the issue from the perspective of student psychology, I guessed the real reason is that their art teacher teaches so well and her class is so interesting that the students like her class best. In addition, art class is something new in rural education and its newness adds to its attraction.

It is interesting that the teachers in power who all began their careers as non-accredited teachers don't try to hold back the teachers who went to teachers schools, but to a considerable extent praise them and hold them up as examples for the students to follow. In fact, these two groups of teachers cooperate very well together, and their cooperation ensures the future of the school and greatly benefits the students. The most outstanding teacher at Fengning Hope Elementary School is Zhao Ruiyin, the third-grade teacher. Zhao Ruiyin was born in 1974. She was assigned to Fengning Elementary School when she graduated from teachers school and has been there four years. She was designated a second-level after her second year and a first-level teacher after her third year. The highest level an elementary teacher can reach is special level, and not everyone can reach it. The lowest level is third level, and teachers coming out of a teachers school start at that level. The fact Zhao Ruiyin reached second level so fast is somewhat remarkable. The main reason she was designated an outstanding teacher is that she is a good natural science teacher and she set up a nature lab at the school. On June 24, just after I arrived at the Fengning Elementary School, the principal Wang Suyun arranged for me to sit in on one of Zhao Ruiyin's classes. Wang Suyun told me that Zhao Ruiyin would be teaching a special class that day, and the following day she would go to the county seat to make a video of it, which would be used as a model for a nature class for the whole of Chengde Prefecture. It was quite an honor for her to be chosen for this assignment. Wang Suyun and Ding Guangdong, the head of

instruction for the township's elementary and junior high schools accompanied her to Chengde. Ding Guangdong rode one motorbike carrying Zhao Ruiyin on the back and Wang Suyun rode another to Chengde. For a village teacher this counted as very special treatment. The following day they took her back to Fengning, and when they arrived at the school, the students came out and welcomed her like conquering hero. The whole school was immensely proud that one of their teachers taught a demonstration class for the whole prefecture. Wang Suyun told the assembled crowd that leaders of the county and prefecture education offices praised Zhao Ruiyin for her maturity. That a young village teacher in a village 30 km from the county seat could catch the eye of prefecture education officials seemed unimaginable to her colleagues. Even though their school was a Hope School and attracted a lot of visitors, most of them only paid attention to the buildings and grounds and very few of them had the patience to sit in on any classes. One day Gu Xianting, who was in charge of early childhood education at the township central school was talking to some of the Fengning Elementary School teachers, and he told them that every year, the county education office grades all the schools in its jurisdiction. If an outstanding teacher at any school publishes an article in a prefectural- or provincial-level journal, the teacher's school will be given a higher grade. Zhao Ruiyin published her article about a village elementary school nature lab, so she was designated a "research teacher." She had raised Fengning Elementary School's score in its annual review, so it's no wonder that the school encouraged her to work hard.

In recent years, county education offices asked all schools to set up a lab course, and stipulated that all experiments must be completed. For village schools, this was a revolutionary change. This made Zhao Ruiyin even more important to her school. Going to the county seat to make a demonstration video of a lab class was just a highlight of her work. Before that, she had gone to many schools to observe the lab classes their teachers taught. The county education office sent all its elementary schools the same set of lab equipment, but it was far from sufficient to carry out experiments. One way in which Zhao Ruiyin stood out from her peers is that she could find a way to put together all the materials she needed so she could do an experiment. Whenever she went somewhere to observe a lab class, she went around to the local scrapyards looking for copper, iron or aluminum scrap that she could use. Sometimes, it took a long time to put together what she needed for an experiment. At Fengning Elementary School, in grades one to three one teacher taught all the courses for her class except for sports, music, art and English, and students also had study hall and noon singing in their classrooms. A day's work was monotonous and tiring, and a teacher had to have a lot of interest and enthusiasm to keep her classes fresh. Zhao Ruiyin had that kind of interest and enthusiasm. She said she enjoyed observing students. In class, some students were embarrassed to ask questions when they didn't understand something, but she could always tell by the puzzled expressions on their faces. Some students' parents didn't get along, and she could tell when they fought by the worried expressions on the children's faces. She understood her students and they in turn supported her. She said, "Children think their teacher is always right and they'll listen to

everything she says." A teacher who is warmed by her students' feelings for her can enjoy the pleasures of teaching.

Three Westernized teachers from outside the county lived together on campus in a bungalow behind the main classroom building. The bungalow was divided into three rooms. The southernmost room was the largest, and it was the first-grade classroom. The middle room was the three teachers' living quarters. The northernmost room was the kitchen. The three teachers ate three meals a day here. The principal, acting head of instruction and two teachers who lived nearby usually ate lunch here as well. The other four teachers, who rented a house in a neighboring village from a farmer, usually went home for lunch.

The three teachers who lived here were Wang Yanhua, the second-grade homeroom teacher; Zhao Xin, the preschool class teacher; and Nie Haiyan, the music and art teacher. Wang Yanhua was newly married, and her husband was stationed at the army garrison between Fengning and Huairou, and so she was another military dependent on Fengning Elementary School's staff. Zhao Xin and Nie Haiyan were both unmarried. They had a large garden outside their quarters. One side of the garden was across from the lavatory on the other side of the school grounds. One night after dinner, I went to their quarters to chat with them. Their three beds took up most of the room. There was a table there that looked like it had been a desk, but it how had a TV and VCD player on it, which were their main source of entertainment. Unfortunately, the school didn't have cable TV, so they couldn't watch any satellite stations. They could only receive three stations, which was fewer than the village residents could get. That evening Nie Haiyan wasn't there. Wang Yanhua and Zhao Xin sat facing each other looking pretty desolate. All their friends were 30 km away in the county seat, and they rarely interacted with the local villagers. I imagined their lives had to be monotonous and boring. Wang Yanhua showed me a name card given to her by someone in the European Union delegation that visited here once whose Chinese name was Bai Xiaochuan. After we had chatted for a while a young man who worked in the township government finance office came by. I wondered if he was romantically interested in one of the women. In the situation in which these women lived, one person's guest was a guest of them all. They all had to prepare their classes in their room, and it looked like the only place they could do so was on their beds. I once asked a teacher at a central school if teachers living in the county seat who were assigned to a village school could refuse to go, and she said they had to go whether they wanted to or not. There were only two ways to make sure you didn't get sent to teach in a village: either you had to know someone who could do you a favor, or you had to give an official an expensive gift. I asked her if teachers adapted well to village life. She said most of them had a hard time at first, but after a year, they usually became accustomed to it. She also said that the parents of teachers from town had mostly moved there from the countryside some years earlier. Many village teachers go back to town of Fridays and return to the village on Monday morning. Nie Haiyan wasn't in the room that evening because she had gone to the township government office in front of the campus to see her aunt, Nie Shuzhen, who was the Humaying Township Party Committee secretary. Nie Haiyan's mother

is a homemaker who lives in the county seat but is working temporarily in the township government office cafeteria. It seemed to me that Nie Shuzhen put some effort into taking good care of her family.

June 26 was a Friday, and that afternoon after sitting in on the fifth grade class taught by Li Jianhua, I left the classroom building with her and saw a strong man with a scarred face waiting for her. She introduced me to him; he was her husband Gao Sheng, who works for the township government providing legal services. I immediately remembered seeing an entry in the Fengning Elementary School journal that said, On such and such a date, "Gao Sheng, an employee of the township judicial office and part-time law teacher, will come to our school to speak about the law." This must be him. I later learned that Gao Sheng had fought heroically in the Battle of Lao Shan, and after he left the army and returned to Humaying, he went around to many schools to speak, and was finally hired as a non-accredited teacher. After teaching several years, he joined the police force as a contract policeman. Not long after, the government issued an order that police departments could no longer employ contract policemen. Because of his contributions during the war, the township government appointed him head of its judicial office. To this day, he still has the status of an appointee and is not a state cadre. By contrast, his wife, who was also a non-accredited teacher at the same time, has long since been accredited and become a permanent employee on the state payroll. This goes to show that all his running around didn't serve him as well as staying put and waiting for things to get better. Because children's household registration status follows their mothers, their child has the status of a non-agricultural rural resident. They rent a house in Beidaochi Village.

When I met Gao Sheng, he invited me to their home to eat dinner. I eagerly accepted because I wanted to see how teachers who rented a local house lived. On the way to their house, we encountered a work crew cutting down a tree alongside the road, and Gao Sheng stopped to talk to them. I later found out he was asking if he could come back and take some firewood. I felt bad about them cutting down the tree, but Gao Sheng thought nothing of it. He said, "Timber is meant to be cut." Just then we saw Zhao Ruiyin, the third-grade teacher, and her husband Wang Jingyu walking home. They lived across the road from Gao Sheng and Li Jianhua. When we got near their homes, they fought over who would have me to dinner. It was decided that I would go to Zhao Ruiyin's home because they didn't have any children. Wang Jingyu is a vocational high school graduate and he works as a traveling salesman for the county-owned grain company located in the county seat. When I met him, he had just returned from Shandong. The house they rent is a small two-room bungalow. When Zhao Ruiyin opened the door, she stood at one side and looked inside before she dared enter. She said she always did that because she was afraid a snake might be lurking inside. There is a wild hillside right behind the house, and when it rains, snakes look for a dry place to wait it out. Her neighbors are more sanguine about snakes coming round. When one does, they kill it and cook it for dinner. There are two things the people living here always have to be on the lookout for—snakes in the house and maggots in the latrine. Zhao Ruiyin and Wang Jingyu share a latrine with their landlord who lives next door.

It is behind their home and isn't walled in. The back wall of their house and the slope of the hill count as a partial enclosure for it. The toilet is a large half-buried crock. After it rains, the path to the latrine is muddy and filthy, and the mud blurs the boundary of the latrine. Their landlord is a doddering old woman. Their house has a dirt floor that has been worn uneven over the years, but Zhao Ruiyin keeps it swept perfectly clean. Unfortunately, it was raining when I visited them, and our shoes were muddy, so small lumps of mud that are hard to sweep up got all over the floor. There is a wood stove in a lean-to outside the house, and it connects to the kang inside where Zhao Ruiyin and Wang Jingyu sleep. Inside, there is a dining table next to the kang, and that's where everyone eats when they have guests. I was sad to see that the school had modern urban furnishings, but the teachers had to live in such primitive conditions. Now that village school teachers are getting professional credentials and schools are building good-quality school buildings and campus grounds, rural schools are approaching the standards of urban schools, but the biggest obstacle holding them back is the backward living conditions of their teachers.

Like all her neighbors, Zhao Ruiyin had a garden behind her house where she grew all kinds of vegetables. As soon as we got home, Wang Jingyu took a basket out to the garden and picked some cucumbers and tomatoes for dinner. There was no question they were 100 % organic. He also took me to the well, and I drank some spring water straight from the spring. He was showing me all the perks of rural life. It is ironic that at the school, Zhao Ruiyin played the role of an urban resident introducing modern city life to farmers' children, but now she was playing the role of a village resident introducing me to the ways of rural life. This clash in village teachers' lives undoubtedly leads to awkward moments.

While Zhao Ruiyin was cooking supper, Wang Jingyu took me over to visit Li Jianhua and her husband. When I got there, their son was running around the house. Outside in the garden, sunflowers were just coming into bloom. I saw immediately that their living conditions were better in just about every way than Zhao Ruiyin's. When we got there Gao Sheng was studying for the bar exam to become a lawyer. He took the test the previous year and got a score of 207, and he needs to get it up to 240 to pass. He said the last 40 points are the hardest. He said, "Last year, I was just feeling out the situation. I hope I can pass it this year, but if not, I'll keep studying and my chances will get better. I'm sure I can pass it by the fifth time." He's sure he'll stick to his five-year plan because he very much wants to spend the rest of his career as a lawyer. I looked at the thick law book he was studying, and every page was covered with notes. Wang Jingyu said, "I thought you spent your free time drinking. I never imagined you were studying." Gao Sheng said that even though he isn't now a lawyer, he has a certificate to provide legal services in in the village legal office, and he can write complaints and handle some other civil matters for clients. He returned to Wang Jingyu's house with us to eat dinner together. During dinner, he told us about the legal work he does, and he also talked about his commanding officer in the army became a mayor in Hainan Island and Guangdong Province, who spoke in an expansive voice with a confident tone and everything he said was well worth hearing. When he was a schoolteacher,

he had taught Wang Jingyu, so Wang Jingyu and Zhao Ruiyin both had great respect for him, and they encouraged his ambitions. When the discussion turned to the tree that had been cut down, Gao Sheng said he wanted to go and collect some firewood, Wang Jingyu said he'd like to collect some too but he didn't know if they should. Gao Sheng speaking in an authoritative manner said, "Tomorrow when Li Jianhua takes her students to collect firewood, get Zhao Ruiyin to have some of her students go with them and collect some for you." When Wang Jingyu heard this, he poured some liquor and toasted Gao Sheng.

Comparing the conditions and atmosphere of the homes of Zhao Ruiyin and Li Jianhua, one can see the difference in the lives of rural elementary school teachers who come from the countryside and from the city. The local teachers can adapt better to the housing conditions, manage to eat better where grocery stores are few and their stocks are limited, and generally satisfy all their needs. Looking at the two couples, Li Jianhua and Gao Sheng look healthier and better adjusted. Li Jianhua is a little overweight like many middle-aged women, and the smile she usually has on her face shows she's satisfied with her life. Although Wang Jingyu has the background and demeanor of a scholar, the corrupting influence of the lure of money and power from his years working at the intersection of business and government have worn him down, and he thanked Gao Sheng overmuch when he shared some firewood with him. Zhao Ruiyin generally seems to be unhappy and angry, whereas Li Jianhua seems satisfied with her life. However, stepping back and taking a broader perspective, the Westernized Zhao Ruiyin appears to have a brighter future. Wang Jingyu is popular with his colleagues, and he says he has an excellent relationship with his boss. In addition, he has an urban household registration and his network of contacts is in the city. In the years he spent on the road, he has seen a lot of the world and it has opened his eyes. He is a very capable salesman and sells thousands of tons of rice on a trip, and there's room for him to move up in his company. Zhao Ruiyin is an excellent teacher, and she won't have to wait long till she can find a job in an urban school. Her bright future also elevates her status in her school. The comparison between Zhao Ruiyin and Li Jianhua epitomizes the relation between urban Westernized teachers and local teachers in rural schools.

Four of the teachers at Fengning Elementary School rent houses in Beidaochi Village, and I visited three of them. I visited Li Jianhua and Zhao Ruiyin at their invitation. I also visited Xiu Guichun unexpectedly. That evening I went to the Hope Restaurant to use its phone to make a long distance call to Beijing. The waitress told me they didn't have a public phone, but the general store two doors down did. The general store's door was opened, but I didn't see anyone there to wait on customers. I saw a pay phone on the wall. I yelled toward the back room asking if anyone was there, and out came Xiu Guichun. She told me her family ran the store. She invited me into the back room. I saw that it was a combination bedroom and living room. A bed, a sofa and a television took up most of the space, and people had to squeeze between them. The woman who works full time in the county judicial office and part time in the township government office cafeteria and her daughter who was already in high school were there sitting on the bed watching

TV. It was very hot and the electric fan was turned on, but it was just blowing hot air around. In two minutes, my shirt was soaking wet with sweat. Xiu Guichun's four-year-old daughter was stretched out on the sofa wiping her face with a wet handkerchief. Xiu Guichun was sitting on the arm of the sofa caring for her. I asked Xiu Guichun if she was sick, and Xiu Guichun said she had heatstroke. If a child has heatstroke, its mother will naturally be worried. I wondered why the two guests seemingly weren't bothered by the heat, but they were so engrossed in the TV show they were oblivious to the fact that the TV was radiating heat like an oven. The incandescent lights, the TV and people crowded together made me want to leave quickly, but Xiu Guichun's husband was playing the perfect host and urged me to stay. I could see that the two of them were genuinely hospitable. Xiu Guichun's husband originally worked for the power company, but now ran the family general store. There's no way a store in a small out-of-the-way village such as Humaying could be very prosperous. When I asked him about business he gave only the most cursory answer, and quickly changed the subject to talk about national and international affairs. I quickly saw that he has a carefree personality. Xiu Guichun is the first-grade teacher, and there's no place for national affairs in the first-grade curriculum. I guess she's not interested in discussing them with him, so he's very happy when a guest comes around he can talk to. With a sick daughter, a loquacious husband and guests who wouldn't leave all crowded into a stifling hot little room, I didn't know how Xiu Guichun could stand the torment after an exhausting day of teaching six-year-olds.

The house that Xiu Guichun and her family rents also has two rooms, but they probably pay more for it than Li Jianhua and Zhao Ruiyin because it is right on the street and has a shop front. It is one of a number of such houses whose front room was converted into a shop when the village grew into a township. The locals call such houses "commercial houses" and most of the people who rent them are outsiders. Some of the students at Fengning Elementary School live in such homes and their parents operate small businesses out of them. Of all the teachers who rent houses, Li Jianhua has the cheapest rent—300 *yuan* per year. This may well have something to do with Gao Sheng working in the legal office. Although Zhao Ruiyin's house isn't as nice as Li Jianhua's, her rent is a little higher, but Gao Sheng guesses it's not much higher.

Renting a two-room house is a cost-saving measure. Some teachers rent a house with its own courtyard. They go for about 1000 *yuan* a year. Ding Guangdong, the head of instruction at Humaying Central School rents a house with its own courtyard and entrance, but he complained to me that paying that kind of rent was a big burden. His parents live more than 50 km away. His wife is from Tahuangqi Village, and they also rent a house there. If you live in the same village as your in-laws, you have to keep up appearances, so he felt compelled to rent a house with its own courtyard. In reality, many village families have a home with its own courtyard, but only the better-paid teachers can afford it. Teachers' pay in Fengning County averages around 500 *yuan* per month, and the lowest paid get only 300 *yuan*. On that kind of salary, you have to grit your teeth before you decide to rent a house for 1000 *yuan* a year. In the eyes of most villagers, a

teacher's position in society is higher than a farmer's, and in his relatives' eyes Ding Guangdong has to live up to his elevated station in life as a leader in a central school, so he felt he had to bite the bullet and rent the expensive house. Most of the teachers at Fengning Elementary School who rent houses live some distance from their families and don't have any pressure on them to keep up appearances, so there's nothing to stop them from renting cheap housing if they're willing to put up with the conditions.

Careful observation reveals that the most mobile population in the villages of Fengning County is schoolteachers, and they constitute the largest group of outsiders living there. In general, village schools do not arrange housing for their teachers, and only some key schools in county seats have apartment blocks where their teachers can live. In recent years, the only buildings village schools have built have been classroom or office buildings, not teacher housing. This year, Fengning County has made a big push to improve nine-year compulsory education, and it is not only trying to raise the percentage of children completing the nine-year program, but also to reach targets for science labs, libraries and campus beautification. The Fengning Education Office calls this a comprehensive compulsory education plan, but despite the name it contains no provision for teacher housing. When most of the teachers were non-accredited, the lack of teacher housing was not a prominent problem. One reason was that most non-accredited teachers came from the area where they taught and they had local housing registration, so they could obtain land to build their own houses, and hence didn't have the problem of having nowhere to live. Moreover, compared to local farmers, they had more cash and higher status than other village residents, so it was easier for them to build a house than other villagers. At that time, only a small number of teachers were accredited, and it was very rare for a husband and wife to both be accredited teachers. Most of the accredited teachers were men who married local women, and the couple could use the wife's household registration and connections to acquire a plot of land and build a house on it. In that situation, if the man taught in his wife's village or a nearby village, he could live at home, and if he worked too far away to commute, he could stay in a dorm at school and return home on weekends. When he retired, the couple could live in comfort in the house they built when he was working. The few female teachers from outside the area generally married a local man of relatively high status in the village, in which case housing posed no problem. However, in recent years, the situation has undergone considerable change. The biggest change has been that large numbers of graduates of teachers schools have been assigned to village schools. Among these young accredited teachers, the men are generally not willing to marry local women, and the women cannot all marry men outside the teaching profession, so a severe problem has arisen of young teachers having no place to live when they get married. The severity of this problem is not limited to the obvious fact that young teachers do not have a place to live, but also extends to the problem that in the future they will face homelessness in their retirement years. In general, villages will not allocate a housing plot to a husband and wife both of whom are accredited teachers. Even though a very small number of accredited teachers are allocated plots, this is in general against

regulations so it can't become the norm. If teachers want to have a building plot in the village where they live or work, they have to buy one, and availability is subject to a number of circumstances such as whether there is excess land available and the teacher's relations with the village powers that be, because according to regulations land cannot be sold. According to convention, a plot of land about 200 m^2 in a convenient location in a township like Humaying costs around 30,000 *yuan*. That's what the township got for some land close to the main road. By contrast, a plot some distance from a village or main road might cost only 3000–4000 *yuan*. No matter where the plot is, the cost of labor and materials to build a four-room house runs around 40,000 *yuan*. So it costs between 40,000 and 80,000 *yuan* to build a house in a village in Fengning County. Such a sum is far out of the reach of a low-paid teacher, so most teachers resign themselves to renting homes their whole lives. Since they don't own their own homes, they don't set down roots in the village where they work. Mencius said, "Only a scholar can persevere at something in which he does not have a personal stake." Teachers are a village's intellectuals, and in ancient times village teachers were considered to be the lowest level of scholars. However, whether they can persevere without having a personal stake in their village varies depending on each individual's personal qualities. According to the guiding thought of the Fengning County education authorities, teachers' thinking should differ from that of ordinary people. Ding Guangdong, the head of instruction for Humaying central school told me, "Like the central authorities, we emphasize theoretical study, political awareness and good conduct, and we are expected to dedicate ourselves to teaching. We believe a teacher must be dedicated."

"Dedication" is a modern term, and its closest corollary in ancient Chinese is "having the heart of a sage." Throughout Chinese history, intellectuals, and especially teachers, have been held to the standards of a sage and used those standards to motivate themselves. They believed they were superior to ordinary people who are concerned only with what benefits them, and so they looked on property ownership as a disgrace. Confucius said, "A scholar who seeks to own a fine home is not a real scholar." This tradition requires scholars to ignore the issue of having a home. This conception of the responsibility of a sage very likely is related to traditional thinking about good breeding, culture, proper dress, and the unity between knowledge and action. However, as modern society has become secularized and intellectuals, including teachers, have become a group of secular professionals, with the result that culture and education have become a way of earning a living and are no longer seen as a path of self-realization. Teachers have to concern themselves not only with the problem of owning their own home but also with the vexing problems of providing the daily necessities of life. The ideal of living like a sage and dedicating oneself to some higher pursuit is no longer capable of motivating most intellectuals most of the time; it can only motivate some of them some of the time.

In Fengning County, young teachers of marriageable age earn approximately 300 *yuan* a month, but in addition to needing to have a home to get married, it costs several thousand *yuan* even for a very basic marriage—one has to buy

at least a double bed, a couple of dressers, a table and a TV to furnish the home in the most rudimentary fashion. If teachers want to advance professionally, for example, if a teacher with a high school diploma wants to earn a junior college diploma, even if everything goes smoothly it will cost around 5000 *yuan* to pay the costs of taking tests, buying books and paying for training courses. Teachers can't count on receiving free medical care, and this is true not only for young teachers but also retired ones, and every time they get sick, they are faced with large out-of-pocket expenses. They are also faced the major expenses of such a trifling nature that outsiders have a hard time believing it, such as having to give gifts of money at the weddings and funerals of all their friends and relatives. Villages are societies with deeply ingrained ceremonies, and teachers are as concerned about keeping up appearances as everyone else. Giving presents as custom dictates is a duty that can't be shirked, and teachers cannot have any source of income other than their basic salary because a village environment doesn't present any opportunities for earning money on the side and village teachers have such a heavy workload that they are exhausted at the end of the day. Also, their contacts are restricted almost entirely to students so they don't have many opportunities to cultivate relations with adults in the village. Since teachers don't hold any power in their village, so they don't have any capital to build relations and exchange favors with other villagers. In large cities such as Beijing, some schools can obtain a lot of money from sponsors over and above their state allotments and use it to raise teachers' salaries, but even the best schools in Fengning County such as the Fengning Hope Elementary School cannot use student fees to raise teachers' salaries because the students' families are so poor that any miscellaneous fees the school charges impose a heavy burden on them, and the fees they do impose are barely enough to maintain the school's equipment and buy office supplies.

In a secular society, how high or low the salaries of a profession are determines its social status, and social status is an important consideration when people are choosing a career. Fengning County teachers can count on getting paid in full on time, which is more than people who have lost their jobs, been laid off, or are receiving half pay or getting paid late can say, but what they earn is far less than employees of profitable companies or government officials who engage in rent seeking activities. A young migrant worker from Fengning County working in Beijing can earn 500 *yuan* a month, but a teacher in Fengning County of the same age earns only 300 *yuan*. This makes it awkward for someone who wants to choose a teaching career because very few women working in government are willing to marry teachers and male teachers aren't willing to marry village women even though many village women would accept. Another phenomenon worth noting is that most female teachers are not willing to marry male teachers because they know all too well how exhausting and poorly paid teaching work is and how few opportunities it offers for advancement. None of the young married women teaching at the Fengning Hope Elementary School are married to teachers, and this does not go unnoticed by their unmarried female colleagues. Gu Xianting, the head preschool teacher at the township central school, told me about a female teacher who firmly refused to consider marrying a male teacher, and after she

reached 30 she finally agreed to marry the deputy director of the county court because she felt her time was running out. I asked a male teacher if he was willing to marry a female teacher and he answered, "Of course!" I asked him how he could find a suitable mate given that female teachers rarely leave their classroom so the chances of meeting them are slim, and he answered, "Hopefully a friend or relative will introduce me to one."

I don't know what effect this inclination of female teachers has on their male colleagues or the extent to which it makes the men feel inferior, or after this inclination became the dominant social behavioral pattern among female teachers to what extent it made female teachers themselves feel inferior. However, one can be sure that after the vast majority of teachers internalized this judgment by society of their profession it had a profound effect on how teachers play their role. Teachers must adopt different attitudes in their interactions with the two groups they have the closest relations with: their students and their colleagues and friends. In dealing with their students, they are the object of worship, the highest authority, and the symbol of culture and knowledge to the extent of being viewed as omnipotent superheroes. In this situation, they must conform to their students' high opinion of them and be very careful to preserve the halo the children see on their head. By contrast, in their dealings with their colleagues and other adults they must retreat to a far more limited position. In schools today, there is such an enormous difference between these two roles and attitudes teachers must adopt that they are in danger of developing a split personality. In my opinion, the high respect teachers have traditionally received has its origins in the widespread recognition of the two roles teachers play. People make every effort to respect teachers to the extent that they honor them the same as their rulers and family members. Due to this respect, the image of teachers genuinely appears when teachers interact with students and is integrated with the image they have in society so that they can effectively transmit culture and shape future generations. Today, the whole of society needs to cultivate this attitude and put it into practice, and it must do a lot of motivational work in this regard.

It is a common occurrence to neglect factors concerning teachers when investing money to build schools. Directives concerning the universalization of nine-year compulsory education specify eight auxiliary requirements concerning such matters as school entrances, licenses, and records cabinets and paper, but make no specific requirements about improving teachers' lives or strengthening teacher training. In recent years, talk of increased investment in education has been confined almost entirely to building classrooms and upgrading campuses, and there has been very little talk of building teacher housing or subsidizing teachers' study. This is undoubtedly related to the revolutionary tradition of emphasizing the collective at the expense of the individual and emphasizing production at the expense of people's living conditions. However, the human factor has always been a key factor in development any undertaking. I am reminded of the Soviet writer Anatoly Rybakov's *Children of the Arbat*, which contains the story of Ryazanov, an alternate member of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee, who was sent somewhere to make preparations for a large building project. He made due with

whatever equipment and facilities he could get by with so he could spend as much as possible on providing good living conditions for the technicians and laborers, and he built a beautiful apartment building, theater, gym and cultural center for them. After some old revolutionaries complained to Stalin about this and said that Ryazanov was wasting state funds, Stalin asked Ryazanov about it, and Ryazanov replied, "Do you want to build a few factories to produce basic products or do you want to industrialize the whole country? If the former, there are a lot of ways to do so at low cost, but if you want to do the latter, you must make workers more prosperous and civilized and give them the opportunity to develop technologically and culturally." Stalin was moved by this explanation.[1] This kind of realization is seldom seen in China today. Schools are a kind of factory that produce educated people, and teachers are their workers. If schools don't have good teachers who have good working and living conditions, then in effect they don't have anything. If we cannot train good teachers and treat them well, even if we build classroom buildings that rival the Great Hall of the People, they will be useless.

"When I was small, I was in awe of your ability to turn every difficulty into a source of pleasure. After I grew up and became you I realized that the chalk marks on the blackboard were rainbows from which teardrops drip. When I was small I thought you could do anything and you raised us up, but after I grew up and became you I realized that teachers raised up others at their own expense." These are lyrics from a song dedicated to teachers written in the 1990s called "After I Grew Up I Became You." Although the image of washing her face with tears and sacrificing herself the teacher who drew the rainbow used is an exaggeration, it reflects the difficult life of being a teacher. Also the mood of the song implies that the situation it describes is a source of pride, not shame, for teachers. It views the situation teachers are into be a reasonable one that is not easily changed, and in fact endorses it. If a situation persists for a long time it becomes viewed as normal or at the very least people are no longer shocked by it. Anyone who wants to change it has to first point out its absurdity, and doing so takes a herculean effort. This is a very depressing insight.

Ding Guangdong did a calculation for me. He told me that at present there are about 2000 young accredited teachers in the whole of Fengning County. To completely solve their housing problem by building each of them a house that meets minimum standards, each house would cost 30,000 *yuan* and all together they would cost 60 million *yuan*. This figure is slightly higher than the annual revenue of the whole county. Hence, he thinks it is impossible for the government to come up with the funds to do so. However, he feels on the basis of his perspective as a primary-level education administrator that it is not necessary for the government to spend 60 million *yuan* to relieve teachers' biggest worry—housing. If it could give teachers a housing supplement of 200–300 *yuan* a month, that would go a long way toward improving their living situation and their state of mind; then

[1] Rybakov (1988).

teachers would be relieved of worries and more people would stay in the profession. I don't know how difficult it would be to implement his suggestion, but given the emphasis Fengning County places on universal nine-year compulsory education and the level of its investment in improving school campuses and classrooms, it is not outside the realm of possibility.

Even though the living conditions of teachers are difficult and sometimes border on being impossible, the teachers at Fengning Hope Elementary School are successfully preserving the dignity, honor and charm of the teaching profession and maintaining the students' worship of and faith in their teachers. A persuasive proof of this is that many of the students here want to become teachers when they grow up. I took a survey of the students at Fengning Hope Elementary School to find out what they wanted to be when they grew up. I gave the students in grades 1–3 and one of the fifth grade classes (113 students in all) a form with nine professions to choose from: scientist, writer, businessperson, teacher, leader, farmer, migrant worker, soldier and policeman. Ninety-three students (82.3 %) chose one of the four choices, scientist, teacher, soldier or policeman; 28 chose scientist (24.8 %), 25 chose teacher (22.1 %), 20 selected soldier (17.7 %), and 20 also selected policeman. Of the other five choices, the next highest was chosen eight times, and one choice was chosen only twice. After analyzing this data, I concluded that it was not difficult to understand the students' choices of careers. Scientist was chosen most often because both the course content and institutional arrangements of education today stress educating people of outstanding ability, and scientists are the most highly praised people in the classroom and models of intellectual accomplishment. Not only are classroom walls covered with pictures of famous scientists, but also the motto "study science, love science" has been elevated to a code of conduct and even to a code of ethics. Soldier was chosen frequently in part because in the classroom soldiers are held up as the political symbol of the state (the Outline for Elementary School Intellectual and Moral Education promulgated by the State Board of Education before 1993 equated loving the PLA with loving the motherland, loving the Communist Party of China and fighting for Communism) and are held up as sacred symbols of sacrifice and bravery. In the classroom, students are constantly told, "The PLA protects the motherland" and "PLA soldiers are not afraid to sacrifice their lives," and they learn about PLA heroes like Dong Cunrui and Huang Jiguang in their course work. Moreover, for rural children, joining the army is an avenue to escape the countryside and accomplish something in their lives. For young children, choosing to be a policeman or teacher is the result of observing adults they come in contact with. Policemen have power and no one bullies them, so this choice has a utilitarian aspect to it. Choosing to be a teacher arises from admiration and respect of one's teacher, which shows that these children are motivated by their mental outlook. The fact that the choice to be a teacher is second only that that of being a scientist shows that the teachers at the Fengning Hope Elementary School are setting a good example.

The culture critic Yan Lieshan shifts from grief to anger whenever he talks about the living conditions of teachers in China today, and says that whenever

people live in miserable circumstances there must be a despicable cause for their misery. He says, "Teachers' wretched living conditions are just one aspect of the desperate situation that Chinese education has fallen into. It's not only that teachers have lost any semblance of affluence and have been reduced to shameful circumstances. (The living standards of a college professor today are far below those of Xiao Jianqiu, the elementary school teacher in the 1920s and 1930s as depicted in the 1963 film *Early Spring in February*.) What's more serious is that teachers are losing respect. In our country with its long tradition of respecting teachers, they have already become an object of scorn. Teaching ethics are crumbling and arbitrary fees charged by schools are mounting."[2] The decline of teachers' economic conditions and social position has to some extent resulted in a decline in teacher quality; although this kind of grandiose sweeping generalizations by culture critics contain a grain of truth, it cannot taken at face value. In Fengning County, I saw that local governments were doing all they could to improve teachers' remuneration, and the county government taking full responsibility for paying all the county's teachers is a much heavier burden than it might first seem. The teachers there are not living in impoverished conditions, and they effectively fulfill the traditional role of teachers of transmitting and preserving culture. However, teachers' status today pales by comparison to the literary golden ages of China's past when teachers were highly revered. There is an interesting passage in *Fengning Manchu Ethnic Autonomous County Annals* that I lingered over when I read it: "According to statistics from late in the reign of Emperor Guangxu (around 1900), there were 52 private schools in Fengning County that had 61 teachers and 973 students, the best one of which was in South Zhifang Hutong, Fengshan, and was run by Guo Jinghou. Guo Jinghou had extensive knowledge of the classics and frequently told his students, 'I am feeding you a spoonful of soup from my bowl, and it will nourish you all your life.'"[3] In ancient times, Fengning County was called a barbaric place, but through the efforts of authoritative teachers like Guo Jinghou it became civilized. Today, teachers of his caliber and character are nowhere to be found in Fengning County. Stories like this make one reflect on the state of education today.

There are a number of posters concerning teachers' responsibilities and duties on the wall of the principal's office in the Fengning Hope Elementary School. They reflect the standards teachers at the school are expected to maintain, and are entirely in line with teaching ideals discussed above. I am attaching them here for your reference.

[2]Yan Lieshan, "Preface" to Yan and He (1999).

[3]Fengning Manchu Ethnic Autonomous County Education Committee Education Annals Compilation Committee (1991), pp. 29–30.

I. Teachers code of ethics

1. Teach in accordance with the law: Study and disseminate Marxism, Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory; uphold the basic line of the Party; fully implement the education policy of the Party and state; consciously abide by the Teachers Law and other relevant laws and regulations; keep one's teaching consistent with the Party and state's education principles and policies; do not say or do anything contrary to the Party and state's education principles and policies.
2. Love and respect the teaching profession: love your work; completely fulfill your duties and responsibilities; teach knowledge and teach students; try to cultivate good intellectual character in your students; conscientiously prepare for and teach your classes and correct students' homework; do not do your work in a perfunctory manner; do not transmit any thinking to students that is harmful to their health.
3. Love your students: be concerned about and care for all your students; respect students' personality; treat students equally and fairly; make strict demands on them and teach them patiently; do not treat students with sarcasm or ridicule; do not use corporal punishment; safeguard students' legitimate rights and interests; foster students comprehensive and healthy development.
4. Engage in rigorous scholarship: establish good study practices; raise your level of teaching and research.
5. Unite and cooperate with your colleagues: be modest and circumspect; help each other; work together to create a civil atmosphere in the school.
6. Respect students' parents: take the initiative to interact with students' parents; conscientiously listen to what they say.
7. Teach with integrity: hold fast to noble sentiments; foster a spirit of dedication; consciously counteract an unwholesome atmosphere.
8. Serve as a role model: set an example in observing social ethics; dress neatly; use proper language; maintain a courteous bearing; strictly maintain discipline; behave in an upright manner; practice what you preach; teach by example.

II. Teachers' responsibilities

1. Actively study politics; concern oneself the major affairs of the country; cultivate oneself morally; serve as a role model.
2. Actively participate in professional learning and education reform; become expert in one field while possessing all-around knowledge and ability; comprehensively carry out quality education; constantly raise your administrative capability and teaching level.
3. Be concerned about and care for all your students; give your students moral education; foster your students' healthy growth.
4. Have a take-charge sense of responsibility; carry out head teacher responsibilities; energetically complete all work pertaining to the school assigned to you and cooperate with head teachers to complete all the work for that class.

5. Actively organize students to participate in all activities organized by the school.
6. Strive to coordinate relations between the school, students' families and society; earnestly make family visits.
7. Conscientiously do daily teaching; thoroughly teach each unit before moving on to the next; strive to raise the quality of your teaching.
8. Do a good job in teaching gifted students and underachievers.

III. Head Teachers' responsibilities

1. Be responsible for political and moral education for the students in your grade and safety education for all students in the school, and for maintaining sanitation.
2. Organize the completion of tasks assigned to you by the school on time in accordance with quality and quantity requirements.
3. Coordinate the work of all teachers teaching the various courses to the class; balance the students' study workload; and raise students' academic achievements.
4. Hold morning and evening meetings every day and at least four class-wide meetings every semester.
5. Actively cultivate students' enthusiasm for study; organize interesting extracurricular activities; foster cultural development in the classroom; and constantly make teaching more effective.
6. Conscientiously make visits to students' homes; visit every student's home at least once a semester; and conscientiously complete home visit forms.
7. Draw up a head teacher work plan at the beginning of every semester and conscientiously implement it.
8. Every day actively greet and talk to others; and see to it that morning and evening meetings, classes and group activities all start on time.
9. Be concerned about and care for all the students in your class; conscientiously do the work of getting students who lag behind to catch up and assist students from poor families.
10. Be responsible for the use and storage of materials used by the class.

IV. Division of work and teacher duty roster (Tables 2.1 and 2.2)

Table 2.1 Division of work

Principal		Wang Suyun					Liu Zhanyou		
Cash	Chinese language teaching and research, moral education:	Math teaching and research, hygiene	Laboratory, nature teaching and research	Health care	Physical education	Library	Young Pioneers, literature and art	Bulletin board, publicity	Loudspeaker
Liu Zhanyou	Li Jianhua	Sun Yanlian	Zhao Ruiyin	He Ping	Wang Yanhua	Xiu Guichun	Nie Haiyan	Zhao Xin	Bao Shuxia

Table 2.2 Teacher duty roster

1	Xiu Guichun
2	Wang Yanhua
3	Zhao Ruiyin
4	He Ping
5	Li Jianhua
6	Sun Yanlian
7	Zhao Xin
8	Nie Haiyan
9	Liu Zhanyou
10	Wang Suyun
11	Bao Shuxia

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Chapter 3
The Transmission of Culture in the Classroom (I)

Fengning County's has a very short history of culture. It is located in the cold north, and for a long time it was home to nomadic ethnic groups. "In ancient times, it was home to the Wuhuan and Xianbei people, and there are no records of any education system there from the Qin and Han dynasties through the Yuan and Ming dynasties."[1] This was the land where the emperor's envoy Su Wu spent long years of servitude herding sheep after being taken captive by the Huns in the Han Dynasty, and recently evidence has been discovered confirming the legends surrounding him. During the reigns of Qing emperors Kangxi and Qianlong, many Manchu immigrants were brought here to strengthen border defenses, and they became the main ethnic group here. "Many of the Manchu men in Fengning were members of the Eight Banner Army or were guards at the imperial hunting grounds. There were also numerous noblemen related to the royal family there who were granted the lands over which they roamed, officials sent there by the court who built themselves stately manors, soldiers who guarded imperial estates, and relatives of those already here who migrated here from Mukden and the Changbai Mountains."[2] There is no way groups like this will have many educated people, so even though there were private schools in Fengning from the mid-seventeenth century onward, the county never produced an imperial-level scholar throughout the Qing Dynasty and produced only a small number of provincial-level scholars but many county-level scholar.[3] Throughout the Qing Dynasty and the Republic, Fengning produced only a handful of famous literary figures, one of whom was Zhu Yude, who in 1828 donated money to build the Fengshan Academy

[1]Fengning Manchu Ethnic Autonomous County Education Committee Education Annals Compilation Committee (1991), p. 1.

[2]Fengning Manchu Ethnic Autonomous County Annals Compilation Committee (1994), p. 3.

[3]Fengning Manchu Ethnic Autonomous County Education Committee Education Annals Compilation Committee (1991), pp. 33–36.

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S. Li, *The "States" in Villages*, China Academic Library,
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in present-day Fengshan. Another one was Guo Shouqi (Juesheng) who took the lead in established the first incarnation of the *Fengning Annals* in 1929, but in the end it folded. At that time, Fengning produced the prominent painter Qin Minqing (1869–1958) who was born into a family of firewood gatherers. He started out as a shop apprentice and later had the opportunity to go to private school. Although he didn't pass the imperial exam, his paintings were famous in Fengning. "In the late Qing Dynasty, most of the important people in Fengning got their start as students of Qin Minqing and they were collectively called 'the painter's students.'"[4] Around the time of the founding of the People's Republic, a cultural celebrity who was a native of Fengning finally emerged who was famous throughout China. That was Guo Xiaochuan (1919–1976). He was the son of Guo Shouqi. He was a child prodigy. When he was 14, he fled to Peking with his father when the Japanese occupied Fengning. In Peking, he studied first at the Peking Mongolian and Tibetan School and then as a non-matriculating student at the Peking University Engineering Institute. He left home at the age of 18 and joined the Eighth Route Army in Shanxi. In 1945 and again in 1947, he was sent to Fengning to serve as head of the county government. After 1949, he devoted himself to literature and became an important modern Chinese poet. This first important cultural celebrity to emerge in Fengning wasn't a learned scholar but rather a poet with a strong subjective streak, and not an academic poet from a university but a revolutionary poet who grew up on the battlefield. This probably accords with the natural law by which culture arises. The appearance of the revolutionary poet Guo Xiaochuan reflects the fact that culture took root in Fengning and after it matured it bore fruit. Guo Xiaochuan's poetry, which is full of emotion and passion and is both coarse and energetic, shows that Fengning culture developed late and was a new development, and it has a different atmosphere from China's long and rich tradition of Confucian culture.

At a time when advanced culture was just emerging from primitive social conditions in Fengning and there were meager external influences on grassroots communities there, a rich folk culture spread among the people by means all its own. Paper cutting was quite developed in Fengning, and included cuttings affixed to windows and walls and also paper gourds. Every village had expert paper cutters and the innovations illiterate village woman made to the craft were a positive outlet for self-expression. *Huahui* was also a flourishing form of recreation in Fengning, and it was practiced to the point that it was a mixture of drama and real life. "In Fengshan, the *huahui* held on the 15th and 16th of the first month of the lunar calendar was an important part of the New Year's celebration. The head of the procession was called the lamp official. He wore a simple gown with a mandarin jacket and cap with a tassel. He was led by a *yamen* pulling a horse and carrying a decorative umbrella, who was preceded by several men who beat gongs and drums to open a path for him and was followed by officials and maidens. During the festival, the lamp official had the powers of the county chief. The lamp official

[4]Fengning Manchu Ethnic Autonomous County Annals Compilation Committee (1994), p. 1125.

was carried in a sedan chair by shoulder poles. For the three days from the 14th to the 16th, he represented the county head and adjudicated complaints brought by the people, and he had the power to flog offenders. Most of the shops in the village decorated their archways and hung lanterns there in hopes that the procession would stop and perform in front of their store, which was an omen of good luck. The dragon lantern procession, lion dance, hanging lamp procession, displays of Shaolin kung fu, stilt walking, boat dance, *yangge* folk dance and *bawangbian* snaked through the village's streets and alleys. Everywhere they went, people beat drums and gongs and lit firecrackers. The artists in the flower procession sang and danced, and people everywhere gave them tea, cigarettes and candy. A peaceful and joyous atmosphere pervaded the whole village."[5] There were more than 20 kinds of *huahui* in Fengning including *erguishuaijiao, wuhui, zhongfan, taihuajiao,* butterfly dance, *cunqiao, jiuqu huanghezhen, bawangbian,* nine lotus lanterns, dragon lanterns, lion dance, boat dance, little cart *hui*, little donkey, stilt walking, big head dance, *xiaoluozi,* little *yangge, judatie,* and waistdrum dance.[6] From these names it can be seen that *huahui* are the most exciting time of the year for villagers in areas that are culturally backward.

Hebei Bangzi Opera is a somewhat culturally more developed form of folk culture than huahui, but it I still not truly sophisticated. Although the residents of Fengning don't have many opportunities to read books, they had plenty of free time and the talent to sing. When I was in Humaying village, I visited the local government clerk Sun Yazhong. Walking down the street, I saw a crowd of young and old people renovating a building. They told me it was the local opera house. I was told that the opera house was falling down, so the village government allocated some money and the residents donated some, and the money from recent years' *huahui* was added to it, and that was enough to rebuild the opera house with volunteer labor. That day, all the people I saw working on the scaffolding were middle-aged women, and there were some men in their 60s sitting on a pile of lumber nearby watching them. When they heard I came from Beijing, one of the men welcomed me by playing a drum. When I took a picture of the opera house, one of the women working under the eaves of the roof waved at me and asked me to take her picture. Everyone working on the opera house was a volunteer. I chatted with the men sitting on the lumber pile and one of them had been head of the village opera troupe in the past. He started studying opera in his teens, and he was taught by an old man who had come here from Dage Town. He's now 68, and he had already trained several batches of students. He said, "In the past, we didn't have electricity so I bought a large gas lamp, and every time I taught my students, we worked halfway through the night. People need entertainment, and if they don't get it they become lifeless. If they can't sing opera, they'll find a way to

[5]Fengning Manchu Ethnic Autonomous County Annals Compilation Committee (1994), pp. 919–920.

[6]Ibid.

waste their money. We sang opera right through the Cultural Revolution. We could only sing revolutionary operas like *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* and *Red Detachment of Women*. We had to buy some fake rifles." The amateur opera troupe didn't earn any money from its performances. They sang just for the love of it. The old man says, "The audience doesn't earn any money listening to opera either. Singing makes you happy. If your mind is troubled by something, you completely forget it once you step on the stage and start singing. If it didn't make you happy, you wouldn't do it." Another old man beside him called Erge also had managed the opera troupe. I asked him if he sang Wenhuzi or Wuhuzi. He said he sang both. Both men could sing the whole of several operas.

I met another opera singer when I was at the Tahuangqi Experimental Elementary School on June 28, but he only sang minor parts. His name was Kang Naide and he was the school janitor. He was 56, and was short and thin like a monkey. He wore a T-shirt with the message "I treat you best of all." Very amusing. However, he seemed to be oblivious to it and said he when he was young he was enraptured by the Tahuangqi amateur opera troupe. He said, "When there were agricultural production cooperatives here, the troupe made all its own costumes. Later Guo Xianglin, who sang Huzi, became Party branch secretary, and he arranged for the village to acquire a complete set of costumes. At that time, our troupe could perform a number of complete operas, and sometimes the county opera troupe would come and perform here and borrow our costumes. At that time, we had the best local opera troupe in the whole county." What was most interesting was that during the Cultural Revolution, the troupe channeled its love of performing opera into doing pioneering work and revolutionary publicity and performed *The Legend of the Red Lantern* and *Sha Jia Bang*. During the day, it did pioneering work such as constructing terrace fields and planting fruit trees, and in the evenings it did publicity by performing revolutionary operas. Anyone who didn't perform one night didn't get credit for their work the next day. Even though working all day and singing at night was difficult, the old man said that everyone was happy to do it because the performing sustained them. After the Cultural Revolution, operas that had been banned were revived.

However, it's been more than ten years since any of the village opera troupes in the area have performed, and Tahuangqi Village's costumes are now all in storage, the roof of its opera house is covered with weeds, the entrance to the stage is blocked by a wall and there's a big pile of sorghum stalks piled next to the wall. Erge, the head of the Humahuang Village troupe, says this is due to the arrival of TV. "The artistic level of TV programs is very high, so who wants to watch village performances?" However, there is still an audience for village opera as evidenced by the renovation of the Humaying Village Theater. Erge proudly sits on the pile of lumber watching the progress of the renovation work.

It's been nearly 50 years since the founding of the People's Republic, and Fengning County's education machine has spread culture throughout the county against this background. This cultural transmission on such a massive scale with systematic organization, a firm will and original content is in sharp contrast to conditions prevailing in the past. We can say that education since the founding of

New China is a kind of comprehensive and deep cultural dissemination, transformation and remolding. Only if we understand Fengning's cultural background can we understand the special significance and deep meaning of each of its key points and links, and thereby look at what is said and done in the classroom with a sympathetic and observant gaze.

When I arrived at Fengning Hope Elementary School on June 24, I visited a classroom for the first time. The principal Wang Suyun had arranged for me to observe the best class, a natural science lesson on the buoyancy of water taught by Zhao Ruiyin. I asked to sit in on a Chinese class and she arranged for me to go to Xiu Guichun's first-grade class the next day where she was teaching the story "The Gecko Borrows a Tail."

In the 1980s, "The Gecko Borrows a Tail" was in the second-grade reader, but in the 1990s it was moved to the first-grade reader. At the beginning of the school year, students had begun learning simple characters and pinyin, and by the end of the year, they were reading long stories that had complex relations between the characters and abstract language. This was enormous progress. By the end of the class, I was amazed by the learning ability of the seven year olds in the class. But after further thought, I realized that in ancient private schools, students began to study the *Analects of Confucius* when they were only seven or eight. The *Analects* were much more difficult and also much much more boring than "The Gecko Borrows a Tail." Perhaps after the modern humanistic outlook on education spread and became dominant, we give too much consideration to children's interests and underestimate what they are capable of.

However, it's good if children find their textbook interesting. "The Gecko Borrows a Tail" tells the story that one day a snake bit a small gecko's tail and wouldn't let go. The gecko discarded its tail to escape and survive. Then the gecko asked a fish, a bull and a swallow to lend it a tail, but they all refused. Finally, it grew a new tail. This story has danger (the snake's attack), suspense (can the gecko borrow a tail) and an unexpected ending (the gecko didn't realize it could grow a new tail). From the perspective of selecting course materials, this story presents new and wondrous information (no one would ordinarily notice that a gecko can lose its tail and grow a new one; one can discover this only through close observation), so it arouses students' interest. All the classes at Fengning Hope Elementary School have the habit of singing a song before class. When I entered the first-grade class, they were singing "I Really Want to Grow Up," which small children strongly identify with. When the song ended, Xiu Guichun announced the beginning of class, and the head student said "Stand up" in a loud voice. All the students stood up and said in unison "Good morning Ms. Xiu." She replied "Good morning everyone" and then had them all sit down.

Xiu Guichun told the class that today they would study "The Gecko Borrows a Tail," and had them open their books to page 108. She asked, "Who is the story about?" She called on Wang Liyan, and she replied, "It's about the little gecko." "What happens to the gecko?" "It loses its tail and tries to borrow a new one." "Very good. Wang Haibo, what does borrow mean?" "It means use something that belongs to someone else for a short time and return it when you're done."

"Excellent. Now, let's read the story again together." The students all recited in unison "Lesson 29, The Gecko Loses Its Tail." Xiu Guichun asked, "When you start reading the story, what do you want to know? What questions do you want to ask? Wang Xiaodong." Wang Xiaodong answered, "Who is it going to borrow a tail from?" Xiu Guichun: "Good. When we read the story, we'll find out." She had Li Zhihui stand up and read, "The little gecko was in the corner of the wall chasing ants, and snake bit its tail and wouldn't let go. The little gecko struggled to get free. Finally, it discarded its tail to get free…" Li Zhihui kept reading till the part where the gecko asks the swallow to borrow its tail. While she was reading, Xiu Guichun turned on the slide projector so the students could look at slides while listening to the story. The first slide was of the gecko at the river bank asking a little fish to borrow its tail. After Li Zhihui finished reading, Xiu Guichun asked the students, "Did she read well or not?" The students all answered "Very well." "Then we should all applaud her." When the applause died down, Xiu Guichun said, "Now, let's go through the story paragraph by paragraph. Let's look at the first and second paragraphs. Wang Haiguang, read them for us. The rest of you think why does the little gecko want to borrow a tail." She read the two paragraphs very expressively, "…discarded its tail to get free. It looked weird without its tail. Who could it borrow a tail from?" After Wang Haiguang sat down, Xiu Guichun asked the students, "Who knows why the gecko wanted to borrow a tail? When you answer, I want you to use complete sentences to tell me who, where and how." She called on Li Zhihui. Li Zhihui summarized the whole first paragraph in her answer. Then Xiu Guichun asked, "Who else can answer the question. Use 'because' and 'so' in your answer." Ma Xiaoguang stood up to answer. "Because a snake bit the little gecko's tail while it was catching ants on the wall. The little gecko discarded its tail to get free, so it needed to borrow a new one." Xiu Guichun said, "It lost its tail and it wanted to borrow a new one. What was it thinking? It looks really weird to not have a tail, so it wanted to borrow one. See. When the little gecko struggled, its tail fell off. Who can perform a struggle the way the little gecko might have done it? What kind of struggle was it?" She had already put long and narrow strips of paper on the students desks, and at her signal they all pulled and twisted them till they ripped. Then she asked, "After the little gecko lost its tail, what harm was done? What good was it anyway? Who knows?" Wang Yuyan stood up and answered, "To protect himself." Xiu Guichun answered, "Right. It broke off its tail to protect itself. This shows that the little gecko uses its tail to protect itself. What other use does it have? If the little gecko didn't need it, it wouldn't go to the trouble of trying to borrow one. What else is it good for?" A student said, "It waves its tail back and forth…" Teacher: "It can help the little gecko do what?" Student: "Climb." Teacher: "If it waves its tail…" Student: "Faster" Teacher: "It can climb…" Student: "Faster." Teacher: "Is the little gecko's tail useful?" Student: "Yes." Teacher: "Right. This is very important. The little gecko not only looks weird without it tail, but more important it can't climb very well without it. When the little gecko lost its tail it tried to think of how to get a new one, and it came up with a good plan. What was it?" The students all answered, "Borrow one." Teacher: "Was it a good plan? Read paragraphs three

and four yourselves. Think about the questions Who does the little gecko want to borrow a tail from? Did anyone lend it a tail? Why didn't they lend it a tail?" The students all read in unison, "The little gecko crawled to the bank of the river. It saw a little fish swimming and waving its tail. The little gecko said, 'Big Sister Little Fish, will you please lend me your tail?' The little fish said, 'No, I need it to swim.' The little gecko crawled away and went to a large tree. It saw a bull standing under the tree eating grass and swishing its tail, and went up to it and said, "Uncle Bull will you lend me your tail?" the bull replied, 'No, I need it to drive the flies away.' The little gecko crawled away and climbed up the side of a building to under the roof where he saw a swallow waving its tail and flying around its nest. The little gecko asked it, 'Aunt Swallow, will you please lend me your tail?' The swallow said, 'No, I need it to maintain control when I'm flying."

After the students finished reading, Xiu Guichun asked, "Who all did the little gecko ask to lend it a tail?" She said the students should answer using the sentence structure "who, who and who." One student replied, "Big Sister Little Fish, Uncle Bull, Aunt Swallow." Xiu Guichun said the student didn't use the specified sentence structure to answer the question. Another student stood up and answered, "Big Sister Little Fish, Uncle Bull and Aunt Swallow." Xiu Guichun said, "Very good. Did you all notice how polite the little gecko was? How did it address the little fish?" Students: "As Big Sister." Teacher: "And the bull?" Students: "As Uncle." Teacher: "And the swallow?" Students: "As Aunt." Xiu Guichun then asked them how the little gecko asked them to borrow their tail. One student stood up and repeated what the little gecko said to each of them. Xiu Guichun asked the student what sentence type and what tone did the little gecko use when it asked them to borrow their tail, but the student couldn't answer. She told the student that the sentence type was interrogative and the tone was urgent. She had students read those passages again, and told him to read them in an interrogative and urgent tone of voice. After he finished reading, she asked another student why the little fish, the bull and the swallow wouldn't lend the little gecko their tails. I leaned over to listen to two students discussing the question. In fact they basically reread the three animals' answers. When the students who were called on stood up to answer the teacher's question, they all used the same wording as in the book. Xiu Guichun was not very satisfied with their answers. She told them, "Answer the question in your own words." However, they just repeated exactly what the animals had said again. She didn't press the matter any further. She told the students that the flies that were bothering the bull weren't ordinary flies but gadflies. She asked them if any of them had ever seen gadflies. All the students quickly answered that they had.

Xiu Guichun next asked the students how the little fish, the bull and the swallow felt when the little gecko asked to borrow their tails. She had the students reread what they all said and decide what their mood was. After they reread the passages, she continued working on this question to give the students some insight. She asked them, "If someone asked to borrow your hand, how would you feel?" She answered for the students, "You wouldn't want to do it, and the question would make you feel very bad because you can't give a part of your body to someone else." She felt her answer was not fully sufficient, so she added, "You

can't lend someone a part of your body, but you could lend someone a pencil, couldn't you?" All the students answered, "Yes."

Next, she talked about how fish's, bull's and swallows' tails move in the water and air. She showed the different ways they moved their tails and taught them the verb for each kind of movement. She told them fish wave their tails, bulls swish their tails and swallows swing their tails. The students stood up and flailed their arms around to imitate the different ways the animals move their tails. While the students were imitating the different movements, Xiu Guichun wrote on the blackboard:

Animal	Motion	Action
Fish	Wave	Swim
Bulls	Swish	Drive flies away
Swallows	Swing	Control flight

After discussing all these actions, Xiu Guichun discussed the little gecko's actions and got the students to experience how a gecko crawls: it's laborious and tiring and progresses slowly. She asked, "Why does the little gecko crawl so slowly?" The students had different opinions, the most prominent of which were it didn't have its tail to help it and it had far to crawl. She had the students reread passage whose tone suggested it was hard for the little gecko to crawl.

When they reached the passage where the little gecko's mother told it it could grow a new tail, Xiu Guichun them to read it with a sense of excitement. Then she asked one of them to define "remind" in her own words, and the student said, "It means 'tell.'" Then she told them that some animals can grow back parts of their bodies that they lose, and asked them "What parts of our bodies grow back?" a student answered "Our fingernails." By then, it was almost time for class to end. Xiu Guichun finished by asking, "How many different kinds of animals' tails did we learn about in today's class?" The students all answered "Four!" Then she asked, "What did you learn in today's class?" After they answered "Tails" and "Growing back," she encouraged them to keep working by saying, "See how much you learned in today's class. Everyone needs to keep studying hard."

On the morning of June 25, the day after sitting in on the first-grade Chinese class, I sat in on Li Jianhua's fifth-grade Chinese class. This was a review lesson. The students were reviewing the historical story "The General and Premier Make Peace." Before class started, Li Jianhua led the students in energetically singing the song "Let Us Pull the Twin Oars." When the song was finished, the students still didn't seem ready to start, so she had them sing another one with the lyrics, "The wind gently blows and butterflies dance lightly on the breeze." I couldn't hear all the lyrics distinctly and only got the general idea that it was about a young woman who went to the mountain to help her aging grandmother. It concludes by saying that anyone who respects the elderly has a kind heart. At the beginning of class, Li Jianhua asked the students what other story besides "The General and the Premier Make Peace" was in the same section of their textbook, and they answered "Using Thatched Boats to Borrow Arrows." She told the students, "This section of the textbook contains famous stories from history. What skills

is it trying to cultivate in you? Think about it." One student answered, "To identify causes and effects." She replied, "That's right. To identify causes and effects. No matter what happens in our lives, everything that happens has its causes and its effects. I want you to think about what are the causes and effects in the story. What is the main cause?" A student said, "Zhou Yu is jealous of Zhuge Liang's ability." Teacher: "Right. The main cause is that Zhou Yu is jealous of Zhuge Liang's ability, so he wants to find a way to…" Students in unison: "Trap him." Teacher: "What method does he use?" Students and teacher in unison: "Make Zhuge Liang produce 100,000 arrows in ten days." Teacher: "And what was the result? How did Zhuge Liang produce them? Sun Ying." Sun Ying: "Zhuge Liang agreed to these conditions, and he produced them within ten days." Teacher: "Li Shaojun." Li Shaojun: "Zhuge Liang used the method of using thatched boats to borrow 100,000 arrows from Cao Cao. When Zhou Yu discovered how resourceful Zhuge Liang was, he willingly acknowledged Zhuge Liang's superiority." After the students had finished answering the questions, Li Jianhua reviewed the causes and effects in the story again, adding that Zhou Yu did not give Zhuge Liang the materials to make the arrows, Zhuge Liang drew up military orders, and agreed to produce 10,000 arrows in three days. She asked, "What qualities does this story praise Zhuge Liang for having?" Student: "Being resourceful and brave." Teacher: "Really? Can you say he was resourceful and brave?" The student didn't answer for a long time. She probed further, "In what way was he resourceful?" Student: "He thought up a clever scheme." Teacher: "Right. He was intelligent and crafty. He could look at the skies and forecast the weather. On that basis, he could predict what the weather would be like on the morning of the third day. What was it like?" Student: "It was foggy." Teacher: "When it was so foggy you could hardly see, he used 20 thatched boats to borrow arrows from Cao Cao. The result was that Cao Cao played into Zhuge Liang's hands and Zhou Yu had to admit defeat. This story shows that Zhuge Liang was smart and wise and he had tremendous foresight and was a great strategist."

At this point Li Jianhua turned to the story "The General and the Premier Make Peace." The Chinese word for "general" has two different pronunciations and two different meanings, and the first thing she did was make sure they read it with the right pronunciation and gave it the right meaning. Then she got the students to notice that the story was made up of three interconnected episodes, which were "Returning the Jade Disk to the State of Zhao," "The Mianchi Meeting" and "Carrying a Thorny Stick on One's Back and Asking for a Flogging." She told them to think about the episodes and try to identify the causes and effects, and told them to use their pencils to write them in the margins of their books. At the same time she played a tape of a professional actor reading the story. After the tape was finished, she led everyone to understand that the general was Lian Po and the Premier was Lin Xiangru. She said, "I want you to recollect, what positions did Lian Po and Lin Xiangru have in the State of Zhou?" A student answered "Both were high officials." Teacher: "Lian Po was…" Students in unison: "A military officer." Teacher: "Lin Xiangru was…" Students in unison: "A civil official." Teacher: "What's the difference between military officers and civil officials?"

Student: “A military officer leads troops in battle and civil officials make plans and stratagems.” Teacher: “Is that a good answer?” Students in unison: “Yes.” Teacher: “OK. A general leads an army into battle from the front lines, and a premier is in the rear a making plans. He relies on his resourcefulness and wisdom, and his weapon is his tongue.”

Li Jianhua: “Let’s read ‘The General and the Premier Make Peace’ again. What is the background of the story, and when does it take place?” A Student: “In the Warring States Period.” Teacher: “Everyone should remember that when I first introduced this story I told everyone that in the Warring States Period, there were seven states, and what were they called?” A student: “The seven powerful states.” Teacher: “What were the seven states?” No one answered. She asked again, “What were their names?” Finally she had to answer her own question, “Qi, Chu, Yan, Han, Zhao, Wei and Qin.” Teacher: “Which of the seven states was most powerful?” Students in unison: “Qin.” Teacher: “Right. Qin was the most powerful. It was always plotting to invade the other states. This story has the conflict between Qin and Zhao as its background. Think about this. Even though Zhao was weaker than Qin, would it just roll over and let Qin conquer it without a fight?” Students in unison: “No.” Teacher: “Right. It wouldn’t let another state come in and carve up its territory and take part of it as its own. Which character’s actions are the main thread of this story? Of the two main characters, Lian Po and Lin Xiangru, which is more important?” Students in unison: “Lin Xiangru.” Teacher: “The story takes Lin Xiangru’s actions as the main thread. That’s how the story develops. Now, I want you to look at the three episodes and identify the causes and effects in each one.”

Li Jianhua began with “Returning the Jade Disk to the State of Zhao.” She asked, “What are the antecedents to this story. What was the cause of the events the story recounts?” Back and forth question and answer between the teacher and students led to the conclusion that the Qin king wanted seize a prize city of Zhao. The result was, “Owing to the resourcefulness and bravery of Lin Xiangru, the jade disk was returned to the State of Zhao.” An important reason the students called Lin Xiangru resourceful and brave is because they had used the same words to describe Zhuge Liang earlier in the class. Li Jianhua asked the students, “In what way was Lin Xiangru resourceful and brave?” and told them to “use a few simple sentences to describe how he was.” One student stood up and explained how he was resourceful and brave in considerable detail, and covered all the key points of the story: “Lin Xiangru used the pretext of pointing out a tiny flaw in the precious jade disk to snatch it away from the Qin king, and then threatened to smash it if the Qin king tried to take it from him by force. And then he secretly slipped out of his quarters late that night and rushed home.” Li Jianhua added that Lin Xiangru told the Qin king, “You are not sincerely offering me 15 cities in exchange for the jade disk, and I cannot casually give it to you. Therefore no one could readily believe the Qin king.”

Li Jianhua discussed the causes and effects in the second episode thus, “I want everyone to think, did the Qin king get the precious jade disk or not?” Students in unison: “No.” Teacher: “This made the Qin king feel incompetent and depressed,

so when he met with the Zhao king at Mianchi, he wanted to find a way to get even for the slight he suffered. The idea he came up with was to get the Zhao king to play the *se* for him. Do you know what the *se* is? It's a stringed musical instrument. He wanted to use this method to humiliate the Zhao king. What idea did Lin Xiangru come up with to protect the Zhao king's honor?" A student: "To put the Qin king in the same situation by having him play the *fou* (a clay musical instrument). So the Qin king couldn't lord it over the Zhao king." Teacher: "Because Lin Xiangru had already bested the Qin king in recovering the precious jade disk. What was the Qin king afraid of? Someone stronger than himself. He had failed to take advantage of the Zhao king. In this situation, would he dare to attack the state of Zhao?" Students in unison: "No he wouldn't." Teacher: "That's right."

Li Jianhua also emphasized causes and effects when discussing the third episode. "After Lin Xiangru succeeded in bring back the precious jade disk, how did the Zhao king reward him?" Students in unison: "He made him a senior government official." Teacher" "Lin Xiangru performed another great service at the Mianchi meeting. How did the Zhao king reward him?" Students in unison: "He made him premier." Teacher: "At this point, how did Lin Xiangru's rank compare to Lian Po's?" Students in unison: "Lin Xiangru's rank was higher." Teacher: "Their ranks were essentially equal. Lin Xiangru was the highest ranking civil official and Lian Po was the highest ranking military official. At court, what was the customary place for the highest civil and military officials to stand?" Students in unison: "The civil official stood at the right of the military official." Teacher: "At that time, the person to the right was considered to have a higher position, so Lin Xiangru's position was technically higher than Lian Po's. Did Lian Po acknowledge Lin Xiangru's higher rank?" Students in unison: "No." Teacher: "Lian Po thought, 'I fought many wars for my king and country and have never lost a battle. What has Lin Xiangru done that can compare with my feats?' What is the source of his power?" Students in unison: "His tongue." Teacher: "How did it make Lian Po feel that Lin Xiangru held a higher position?" Students in unison: "Unhappy." Teacher: "This state of affairs is the background of the third episode. I already told you its cause. Who can repeat it for me?" A student: "Lian Po was jealous of Lin Xiangru because Lin Xiangru's position was higher than his, so he always looked for ways to humiliate him. However, in the end, Lian Po was touched by Lin Xiangru's noble character. As a form of apology, Lian Po gave Lin Xiangru a thorny stick and asked him to flog him with it." Li Jianhua further explored the details of the story: "How did Lian Po humiliate Lin Xiangru?" A student: "He said he would embarrass Lin Xiangru whenever he met him." Teacher: "Did he embarrass Lin Xiangru?" Student: "No. When Lin Xiangru knew that Lian Po was going to be at court, he stayed away claiming to be sick." Teacher: "Did they ever meet or not? Wang Lizhi." Wang Lizhi: "Yes, they met." Teacher: "What happened then?" Wang Lizhi: "Once Lin Xiangru came out from his home in his carriage and saw Lian Po riding his chariot rapidly down the street. Lin Xiangru had his driver quickly turn back because he was afraid that if Lian Po saw him Lian Po would create a scene and things would get out of hand."

Teacher (laughing): "Yes, get out of hand. How did Lin Xiangru try to keep things from getting out of hand? By avoiding Lian Po. Think. Was Lin Xiangru afraid of Lian Po?" Students in unison: "No." Teacher: "What does the textbook say about this?" Teacher and students in unison: "Lin Xiangru said, 'If I'm not afraid of the Qin king, why should I be afraid of General Lian Po?'" Teacher: "Then why did Lin Xiangru go out of his way to avoid Lian Po whenever he could?" A student, "Because Lin Xiangru was the head of civil affairs of the state of Zhao, and Lian Po was the head of military affairs. A personal conflict between the two of them could weaken the state of Zhao, and Qin would take advantage of this weakness to invade Zhao and annihilate it." Teacher: "Very good. Now who's going to tell us the story of 'Carrying a Thorny Stick on One's Back and Asking for a Flogging.' Sun Dalin."

Sun Dalin recounted the story partly by reciting portions of the text and partly by summarizing the rest. Li Jianhua had his classmates applaud when he was finished. Then she hung a small blackboard on the large blackboard on which she wrote the causes and effects of the three stories. The students took turns reading the small blackboard and the classroom was filled with noise. Then Li Jianhua asked them the meaning of the two proverbs in the story "returning the jade disk to the state of Zhao" and "carrying a thorny stick on one's back and asking for a flogging." She went into particular detail about the latter proverb. She told the students in ancient times, floggings were always done with sticks from the *jing* plant because they has especially sharp thorns. Lian Po had stripped to the waist and carried a bundle of them on his back when he went to see Lin Xiangru, and they already scratched up his back pretty bad. She asked the students why he did that. The students answered in unison, "Because he knew he was wrong." She said, "He knew he was wrong and he carried the thorny sticks on his back to see Lin Xiangru because he wanted Lin Xinagru to flog him for what he did wrong. In what way was Lian Po being brave?" Students in unison: "He was brave to admit his mistake."

Then Li Jianhua reviewed the three stories using the question and answer method, and wrote important words from the text on the blackboard and told the students to remember them. During this review, she particularly stressed the motivations of the two men. "Lin Xiangru avoided Lian Po in the best interests of the state of Zhao, and in the end Lian Po asked Lin Xiangru to punish him also in the best interests of the state. What does "make peace" mean in the title of this story? It means they resolved their personal conflict and worked together to protect their country." Then she went on, "What did we learn from this story about what kind of person Lin Xiangru and Lain Po were?" Write your answers in your notebooks. The students all bent their heads and busily wrote in their notebooks. When they were finished, Li Jianhua called on one of the students to stand up and read what she wrote. Student: "Lin Xiangru was resourceful, brave and broad-minded. Lian Po was very jealous but also brave enough to admit his mistakes." Teacher: "Lin Xiangru always kept the big picture in mind and was generous to his friends. Does that mean that Lian Po was a bad man?" Students in unison: "No." Teacher: "What does this story show us about the thinking of these two men? It shows us that they were both patriotic in different ways."

At the end of class Li Jianhua summarized the whole chapter of the textbook. "From this story we can see that Lian Po let pride in his accomplishments turn to arrogance and so he picked a fight with Lin Xiangru instead of working with him. Lin Xiangru always took the best interests of his country as his starting point and didn't let himself be drawn into petty conflicts with others. He set an example for Lian Po, who learned from it and asked Lin Xiangru to punish him for his arrogance, after which the two of them became friends for life. This is a glorious story from Chinese history that has been passed down for thousands of years. Lin Xiangru is held up as a symbol for civil and military officials working together in the country's best interests. Another lesson we should learn is that no matter what we do, we always need to give first consideration to overall interests. We should be broad-minded and not be jealous or resentful of other people who are honored or rewarded. How does that apply to our class? Tell me what kind of group we are?" Students in unison: "A collective." Teacher: "If a conflict occurs between two of you, how should it be dealt with? What if neither will acknowledge the other's position?" A student: "Both should make concessions. They should try to understand the other's viewpoint." Teacher: "'Both make concessions' and 'both acknowledge the other's position'? Remember the basketball game the other day when a player on the other team knocked one of our players down. Should our player yield to him? What should happen in this situation?" No one answered for a long time, so Li Jianhua continued, "If you knock over an opponent, what should you do?" Now, the students didn't hesitate at all. They answered, "Apologize." She continued saying, "In this situation we should uphold the principle, 'friendship first, competition second.' So in the future when conflicts arise between friends and classmates, how should we resolve them? We should understand each other and both make concessions. Next, I want you to look at these illustrations from the textbook. After class, I want you to tell each other the stories from the textbook. That's your homework."

I sat in on the third-grade Chinese class in the afternoon of June 26. After sitting in on the Chinese class for the lowest and highest grades, I wanted to sit in on the one midway between them. The third-grade teacher was Zhao Ruiyin. When I entered the classroom, it was noisy but orderly. Her tone of voice was very different from Li Jianhua's, which was energetic yet natural, and Xiu Guichun's, which was melodious yet clear. In that day's class she was teaching stories from a book of fables, "Covering One's Ears While Stealing a Bell" and "Losing the Sheep Then Repairing the Pen." She told the students to turn to the beginning of the first fable on page 143. She started by having the students remember fables they had already studied, "Pulling Up Shoots to Make the Plants Grow Faster" and "Marking the Side of the Boat to Identify Where the Sword Had Fallen into the Water." Then she told them, "Read these two fables. Pay attention to new words. Also think about what the two fables are about." While the students were reading the two fables out loud in unison, she hung up a small blackboard upon which she had written the new words in the text: fable, cover one's ears, steal a bell, neighborhood, cave, losing the sheep then repairing the pen, persuade, regret. Xiu Guichun had a student Li Yanli lead the students in reading a fable. After she

finished reading, she had another student correct the pronunciation of three words Li Yanli had mispronounced. Then she had a third student read the fable again with all the words pronounced properly.

After finishing studying the vocabulary, Zhao Ruiyin called on a student to tell what the fable "Covering One's Ears while Stealing a Bell" was about. The student said, "Once upon a time there was a man who saw a bell hanging in front of another man's home and he wanted to steal it. He thought, 'If I cover my ears no one will hear me steal it.' So he covered his ears and stole the bell. However, he was very quickly caught." Next, Zhao Ruiyin had another had another student recount the fable "Losing the Sheep Then Repairing the Pen." When that student was finished, Zhao Ruiyin asked another student to tell it more simply. All the students began telling the fables using the phrase "once upon a time." When they were finished, Zhao Ruiyin said, "Good. Now let's first work on 'Covering One's Ears While Stealing a Bell.' I want all of you to think about the protagonist of the fable. What did he want to do, how did he go about doing it, and what was the result? Liu Hongying." Liu Hongying stood up and said, "He thought—'Fables Sect. 2: Covering One's Ears While Stealing a Bell.' Once upon a time there was a man who saw a bell hanging in front of someone else's door. He knew that if he took the bell its motion would make it ring…" Liu Hongying answered the question "What did he want to do" by repeating the title of the fable and then reciting the first part of it, but she still mispronounced the word "bell." The teacher corrected this mistake and then had everyone read the fable again and told them to think about what was the thief thinking, what did he do and what was the result. While the students were reading to themselves in a low voice, the teacher stepped down from the platform and walked among the students and when she saw someone had finished reading she bent over and quietly asked them these three questions. When she finished that she returned to the podium and called on one student to stand up and answer the questions. In answering the question, the student repeated the exact wording in the book "the thief stuffed his ears." The teacher asked him what "stuffed" meant and the student answered "blocked."

After thoroughly discussing with the students what was the thief thinking and what did he do, Zhao Ruiyin asked, "What was wrong with his thinking?" A student answered, "He blocked his ears so he couldn't hear, but no one else blocked their ears, but he thought they couldn't hear either." Teacher: "He was really dumb, wasn't he?" Students in unison: "Yes." Teacher: "To use another word, he was very foolish. As foolish as you can get. What happened in the end? The bell rang and he was caught. He blocked his ears, but everyone could hear perfectly well. What does 'Covering one's Ears While Stealing a Bell' tell us? What mistake did he make? He clearly knew…" The students followed along with their teacher mumbling indistinctly and I couldn't make out what they were saying. Teacher: "…the result. What does this fable tell us if you act in this way?" The student's answer was confused, so the teacher led her in pointing out the thief's stupidity, and got her to use the sentence form "knew what the result would be and what would happen." The student said, "he knew that moving the bell would make it ring, but he took it anyway and got caught." The teacher said, "That's called

putting the noose around one's neck. He got himself in trouble. This fable ridicules people who know that it's wrong to do something but do it anyway. They only have themselves to blame." Then the teacher got the students to understand the phrase "Covering One's Ears While Stealing a Bell" by defining each of the words in it and then expressing it in other words. The teacher asked, "What kind of person does this fable ridicule? Wang Chunyan." Wang Chunyan stood up and answered. Zhao Ruiyin said, "Your answer is right but you didn't express yourself very well." Then she hung a small blackboard on the wall with the standard answer written on it and had a student stand up and read it to the class. "'Covering One's Ears While Stealing a Bell' tells that if you want to do something wrong you can't keep other people from finding out. If you think you're smart, you're only fooling yourself. This fable ridicules people who do things they shouldn't do and the only people they fool are themselves." The student stuttered a little reading it, and when he was finished, the teacher had the all write it down. After the students were finished Zhao Ruiyin asked, "After reading this fable, are you going to act the way he did." Students in unison: "No." teacher: "Good. We all know very well that we can't do things that are wrong, and when we're thinking about doing something we need to think very carefully about what will happen if we do it. Stealing something is something we can never do. OK, now let's turn to the next fable 'Losing the Sheep Then Repairing the Pen.'"

Zhao Ruiyin: "What is the meaning of the phrase 'losing the sheep then repairing the pen'? How do you understand it? Liu Bingzhang." Liu Bingzhang: "How do I understand it? He lost the sheep so he fixed their pen." The first thing Zhao Ruiyin did was to distinguish between the two different pronunciations and meanings of the Chinese word for pen and told them which was the right one here. Then she had the students look at the paragraphs one by one and state the main idea of each paragraph. The students didn't say what the main idea of the paragraphs was but only recited the text from memory. The paragraphs were pretty long, so she told the students they had to give short answers to get them to use their own words. She said, "Just now the two students didn't answer my question but instead basically just retold the whole fable. I want short answers like this. 'The main idea of the first paragraph is that the shepherd lost his sheep because he didn't listen to his neighbor.' 'The main idea of the second paragraph is that he felt bad about losing the sheep so he went right out and fixed their pen.'" Zhao Ruiyin then expounded on the logic of the fable. "When his neighbor told him he should fix the sheep pen, why didn't he? What was he thinking? Wang Huaiyong." Wang Huaiyong answered in a very low voice so Zhao Ruiyin repeated what he said for the class. She said, "He said he already lost a sheep, so what's the point of fixing the sheep pen. Is this way of thinking right or wrong?" students in unison: "It's wrong." Teacher: "What's wrong with it?" a student: "Maybe a wolf will come and kill the sheep that are left." Teacher: "Maybe or definitely?" students in unison: "Definitely, because the wolf knows the pen has a hole in the fence." Teacher: "What is the lesson this fable is trying to tell us? Let's start at the beginning." Zhao Ruiyin used the question and answer method to guide the students through every step of the fable from losing a sheep to repairing the fence. Then

she said, “After the shepherd lost all his sheep, he fixed the fence. That tells us that he regretted not fixing it earlier. That means that he knew that what he did was wrong. So how would you describe him?” Student: “Mend your ways when you realize you’re wrong.” Zhao Ruiyin said that was right and then elaborated further, “In this case mending one’s ways meant fixing the pen so no more sheep would be lost. What does this tell us about how we should act at school and in our lives? Wang Chunlei.” Wang Chunlei: “Whenever we realize we’re wrong, we should mend our ways right away.” Teacher: “Did you all hear that?” Students in unison: “We heard it.” Teacher: “In our lives, is it OK to realize we’re wrong and not change?” students in unison: “No.” Teacher: “The more we keep making the same mistake, the farther we stray from the right path, and our mistakes become bigger and bigger. So we must always start from little things and never do things that are bad. When you know you did something wrong, you have to change your ways right away. Then you’ll be a better person. After class, write all the new words in your notebooks.”

The reason I here transcribed what transpired in the first-grade, third-grade and fifth-grade Chinese languages classes I sat in on without worrying whether the reader might find so much detail annoying or boring is that I wanted to preserve the vividness and completeness of the classroom experience. In researching micro phenomena vivid and complete details convey more and better information than statistics. The teaching that goes on in the classroom is the essence of education because it determines the extent to which the curriculum specified by law is implemented. No matter how rich the curriculum specified by law is it is only a kind of potential energy, and it requires the medium of the classroom to be transformed into kinetic energy. Each classroom is a different medium that has its own distinct state, and that state goes a long way toward determining whether the content of the curriculum is strengthened or weakened, enriched or diminished. Through the teaching that goes on in the classroom, we can what the teacher gives to the students and what the students take from the teacher and so see the whole picture of the way education transmits culture.

In our experience and observation of classroom teaching, the course content can sometimes be altered or even distorted in the classroom. A teacher’s alterations to the course content can be either intentional or unintentional. Unintentional alterations are usually due to the teacher’s intellectual and cultural level being lower than the course content requires, so she cannot correctly understand and grasp the course content. Even though she thinks she is correctly transmitting the course material, God only knows what she’s saying. When I was in elementary school, one of my teachers frequently misread phrases from classical Chinese, completely distorting their meaning. This is especially the case in areas where people speak a local dialect and some teachers don’t know the proper Mandarin pronunciation of unfamiliar words from classical Chinese. The place where risible unintentional distortions of the course material occur is in rural elementary school classrooms. Most intentional alterations to course content are made by teachers with a relatively high educational and cultural level. They thoroughly understand

what the textbook says and can identify inadequacies in the text, and subsequently fill in the gaps in their discussion of the text or find supplementary to give to the students. When I was in college in the 1970s, it was very common for college professors to improve upon the content of our textbooks in this way because at that time we were still using old outdated textbooks and our professors were constantly updating their knowledge by reading newly published research in professional journals. As a result, their lecture notes were frequently far superior to our textbooks. Of course, intentional changes to course materials sometimes one-sided or superficial, but in general, the intellectual level of professors who prepared their own course materials was relatively high. From my observation of the teachers at Fengning Hope Elementary School, I concluded that although some teachers unintentionally altered the course materials (I will discuss these alterations below), in general the alterations were not very significant and the teachers could basically convey the meaning of the text. Of course, I didn't discover any of the teachers at the school intentionally altering the course content. Even though everybody has their own opinion about intentionally altering course content, we can at least imagine that a teacher who intentionally alters course materials that are widely used would have to have high status in the profession, and teachers in village schools would not have such status. In other words, given the nature of village schools and their teaching today, it is not possible for a village teacher to achieve that status. Most of the teachers at Fengning Hope Elementary School are secondary school graduates. This kind of qualifications conforms to the state's requirements for elementary school teachers and in general this level of education is sufficient to meet the requirements for teaching the content of elementary school courses, but it doesn't equip teachers with much more intellectual preparation than that. In addition Fengning Elementary School is in a remote village and do not possess a good academic environment, and there is no regular cultural life aside from television, folk festivals and amateur theatrical productions. The school's finances and the teachers' salaries do not enable them to read many books or magazines or to travel and enrich their experience. In this situation, it is hard to imagine that they could develop an independent viewpoint different from that set forth in their teaching materials. To a large extent, this is in accord with the general situation of the Fengning Hope Elementary School. Because it is a Hope School, it is something of a showpiece and a pacesetter, so the quality of its teaching staff and administration is much better than other village elementary schools. In most such schools, the teachers mispronounce words, get their meanings wrong and mix up the details of different stories. Even though the teachers at the Fengning Hope Elementary School rarely make such unintentional alterations to the course materials, because they teach in a village school and so they are not immersed in vibrant cultural traditions and a rich cultural environment, so it is not easy for them to make intentional alterations that enrich the students' learning experience. Therefore, schools like the Fengning Hope Elementary School best exemplify the government's teaching goals and they can reliably fulfill those goals even if doing so is not their primary motivation.

The notions of intentional and unintentional alteration are ones of my own devising. When making a concrete analysis of the classroom teaching in Fengning Hope Elementary School, I am inclined to borrow terminology from Western society of education because that brings to the fore content that obscured when using other terminology. Wu Kangning, a scholar with a background in Western society of education, wrote, "Even though all teachers equally have the role of representatives of society, they do not all have the cultural level the education authorities would like them to have, and hence not all teachers genuinely represent society in imparting educational influence. In other words, teachers who are regarded as 'educators' need to be distinguished into three groups, those who are representatives of society, those who are not representatives of society and who are 'anti-representatives' of society. Obviously, teachers who are anti-representatives of society have difficulty accepting the ideology the education authorities embed in the school curriculum and generally are critical of it. Such teachers do not faithfully teach the students the course content and frequently transmit 'knowledge' whose ideological orientation and values are directly in conflict with what is intended. This shows that it is very possible that teachers transmit content in conflict with the curriculum in the classroom."[7] "In the case in which a teacher is not an 'anti-representative' of society but nonetheless is not a representative of society (habitually or occasionally) one can infer on the basis of the above logic that the teacher will not always faithfully transmit the course content, but will transmit something contrary to it."[8]

Judging on the basis of Wu Kangning's definitions of these terms, we can say that no content directly in conflict with the course curriculum is taught in the classrooms at Fengning Hope Elementary School. Sometimes "some" and "none" are equally important to researchers. The Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers is prominently displayed in the principal's office at Fengning Elementary School. Its first article sets forth the requirement, "Maintain unity with the Party and government's principles and policies when teaching, and do not violate them in one's words or actions." The second article stipulates, "Do not transmit any thinking that is harmful to students' bodies or minds." In Fengning County, where the government has a monopoly on the county's political, economic and cultural resources, these requirements can be and already have been fully implemented. Because schools' course content changes more slowly than society develops, and at the present time schools' course content is somewhat at odds with the realities of social life, students constantly receive influences in their lives outside the classroom whose content is contrary to the course content in the classroom. However, these influences are not reinforced in school, but rather are deliberately minimized. I once discussed the question of whether influences in students' lives outside school neutralize or undermine what they learn in school. They said there is this tendency

[7]Wu (1998), pp. 330–331.

[8]Ibid.

but they all strive to counter it in their ideological work with their students. At present it is difficult to say how effective this ideological work is. At least it shows that the teachers will not permit content that is counter to the curriculum to enter the classroom from outside. In all the classes I sat in on at the Fengning Elementary School, I never noticed any such content, and in my discussions with the teachers I never noticed any such indications. Of course, teachers don't live in the pure world represented in the course curriculum and do not live in a vacuum, and there is no way of knowing whether they have any sentiments contrary to mainstream culture. However, on the basis of my observation, most people who have such sentiments will revert to the use of mainstream terminology and logic whenever they are called upon to systematically articulate their thinking on some subject. Wu Kangning thinks, "There are almost no teachers who maintain unity with the ideological and value orientation of the education authorities on all matters at all times."[9] This judgment is perhaps overly influenced by Western society of education. In China there are many such teachers and they can be found anywhere.

Content that is not included in the syllabus can be found in the Fengning Hope Elementary School's classrooms, especially in Chinese classes, although as stated above it is extremely limited. On the basis of my understanding, I believe that Zhao Ruiyin's lesson on "Covering One's Ears While Stealing a Bell" contains such content. The content of the fable itself is confined to knowledgeable people ridiculing a fool, and the ridicule is directed against the stupidity of the theft and not against theft itself, and it does not censure theft or any other form of wrongdoing. Of course, one cannot say it encourages theft. Although this fable ridicules the stupidity of the thief it implicitly condones theft by clever means, and it can be said without exaggeration that one can see the perspective of an accomplished thief in it almost as if accomplished thieves are laughing at the foolish thief for getting in trouble because of his own stupidity. At the very least it should be said that this fable takes a neutral attitude toward ethical issues. It only discusses wisdom and stupidity, not right and wrong, good and evil. However, the first thing Zhao Ruiyin wrote in analysis of the fable was, "This fable tells us that if someone wants to something bad without anyone finding out, that's impossible." There is no basis whatsoever for this statement in the text of the fable. It's groundless because the fable doesn't distinguish between good and bad intentions, and it doesn't embody a fatalistic view that all evildoers will get their just deserts, so there is no basis in the fable for her conclusion. The comments she made to the class at the end of the discussion departed even farther from the content of the fable. She said, "This fable ridicules people who know something is wrong but do it anyway. They only hurt themselves." There is no basis in the text to substantiate her claim that the thief knows it's wrong to steal. If you say that the thief knew it was wrong to cover his ears while he was stealing the bell, that interpretation is even farther off

[9]Ibid.

the mark. If he knew that, he wouldn't be foolish, there would be no one to ridicule and the fable would be pointless.

However, even though Zhao Ruiyin teaching content not implicit in the course material, it was limited to her personal interpretation of the fable; however, if you consider her remarks in light of the course outline and the overall education requirements, a good case can be made that her interpretation of the fable was in line with the basic goals of education. The *Teachers' Teaching Guide* for the fifth grade language textbook compiled by the elementary school language text editorial office of the People's Education Press states the guiding editorial thought for the language textbook to be, "At the same time the teacher imparts language knowledge and carries out basic language training, she should also pay attention to transmitting ideological education… so that in the course of acquiring language knowledge, students also receive a certain amount of ideological education and the instrumentality and ideological function of the academic field of language studies."[10] One can imagine that Zhao Ruiyin's interpretation of "Covering One's Ears While Stealing a Bell" derives directly from the third-grade *Teachers' Teaching Guide*. Teaching guides in fact comprise a part of the teaching content for any course.

Li Jianhua's discussion of the three stories involving Lin Xiangru and Lian Po is a much better example of teaching content not implicit in the course material, most particularly when she compared the duties of a prime minister and commanding general. She told them that a minister drew up plans and does most of his work by talking. This could easily lead students to think a prime minister is a commanding general. However, the teachers at Fengning Hope Elementary School for the most part fully conveyed the content of their course material, and they not only firmly but almost doggedly conveyed the course content, and with the education they received and the experience they have acquired they are fully capable of doing so.

In Chinese classes at Fengning Hope Elementary School, the primary way the teachers taught the course content was by exhaustively explicating the text. The teachers all had an unspoken professional attitude of viewing the text as being almost sacred. The focus of their classroom work was to make sure the students didn't miss any details in the text and fully grasp its implications, so they went over the text again and again. They devoted most of their time and effort in class to this. They all took their primary goal to be getting the students to clearly understand the story the text was telling. Take Li Jianhua for an example. She began by telling her students the focus of training of the coming unit was to learn how to identify the cause and effect, and then urged them to recall stories following the cause-and-effect clue. It was true that identifying the causes and effects was the focus of training of the unit, but she went much further beyond that and developed

[10]Elementary School Chinese Department of People's Education Press (1995), p. 1.

an exclusive and natural teaching method. It is generally known that the causes and effects are important part of plots. The causes and effects are key to understanding how plots take place and integrating all plots. Li Jianhua led her students in identifying the causes and effects in each of the three episodes of the story "The General and the Premier Make Peace." She made an episode the causes of the one that follows (to be strict, she took "Returning the Jade Disk to the State of Zhao" as the causes of "The Mianchi Meeting" and believed that the meeting was designed by the Qin king to make amends and get the better of the Zhao king because he was depressed after he failed to get the jade disk. This analysis seems forced and simple as if the Qin king was only interested in quarreling with the Zhao king just to vent his spleen and when his first ruse had failed, then he tried another), racked her brains for giving prominence to each plot and integrating them so that the students might better understand and remember them. For the plots constituted by each pair of cause and effect, Li Jianhua urged her students to recall each and every of the important movements the characters made. The answers and questions method she used (actually most teachers at Fengning Hope Elementary School do this) was especially important for the progressive relationship between plots. It is not exaggerating that she was at pains and took the trouble to keep her students abreast of the plots in the text. This was more or less true with Zhao Ruiyin. She didn't make it clear that she would identify the causes and effects, and she kept asking "What did he think at first, What did he do later, What was the result" and "What is this about," which all led the students to plots based on the causes and effects. The plots of her fables were much simpler than those of Li Jianhua's historical stories, but she did spend a lot of time and energy on discussing plots during her lectures. She repeated the plots of the texts too often and at the same time, had the students read texts time and time again in class. Xiu Guichun also asked questions concerning the causes and effects to introduce every paragraph of the text and asked her students to read the text in order to understand its plots. She asked the question "Why did the little gecko try to borrow a tail" to introduce the first two paragraphs of the text and asked the questions "From whom did the little gecko try to borrow a tail," "Did anybody lend it a tail" and "Why didn't anybody lend a tail to it" to introduce the next three paragraphs.

Making plots the focus of lectures on Chinese language is an interesting phenomenon that deserves attention. Plots are the most visual and the easiest content to grasp in the text. When we begin reading, what we get first are plots; plots are what first appear in people's minds when they read. Plots are not characters, moods, subject matters or atmospheres, but they are connected one way or another with these parts of articles; all these parts must be given expression to by means of plots. That is why when we grasp plots, we will keep in touch the other parts of the article. This often makes us feel that as long as we grasp the plots we will understand the whole article. If we don't understand or become aware of more of the article, we will often consider the plots to be the whole article. An article means plots, and plots mean an article, which is true to many readers. When someone reads an article, he or she gets an idea of the plots and doesn't know more about the article except the plots. As a Chinese saying goes, "The experienced

appreciate to the contents whereas the inexperienced to see the appearance." By appearance, it means plots. Of course, the reason that teachers at Fengning Hope Elementary School stress the importance of plots is not that they know nothing but plots; they have their special reasons as teachers. The most important reason is that plots are a dead dog which is easy to catch, reliable, and always there for them to catch to kill time in class. All teachers are naturally inclined to use them because it is human to choose easy things first, not difficult ones. Plots are also the most interesting and can attract the attention of students. As plots are all what I said they are earlier, they are the visual part of the article. When students understand the plots, then that is all they can do about the article. As for the more complicated and delicate and richer things that are behind or beyond the plots, it is difficult to give expression to them, and even if the teachers of village schools who were graduated from specialized secondary teachers schools want to explain them, they may not be able to do that. Ms. Xiu Guichun had her students read "crawl and crawl" in the right tone and feel how the gecko felt when it failed to borrow a tail from the fish, bull and swallow. All this was outside the plots and allowed the students to have their esthetics, which was great, but this kind of thing seldom happened.

In Chinese class in Fengning Hope Elementary School, more energy is spent on words, expressions and sentences than on other things. Of course, this is truer with lower grades. Zhao Ruiyin picked up difficult words, wrote them on the blackboard and taught the students about them. She went into details about words including how to distinguish r-ending retroflexion, light and heavy tones and took the trouble to stress the importance of this on several occasions. Xiu Guichun not only wrote important verbs such as wave, swish and swing on the blackboard but also took pains to get the students to perform them. She also made sure that her students fully understood how to use "because" and "whoever." In the fifth-grade class Li Jianhua also took care to single out words with different pronunciations and analyzed words and expressions she believed the students had difficulty understanding. It is traditionally held that the main purpose of schooling is to become able to recognize words and become ale to read. In fact, the words one learns are the foundation for doing well in all courses, so teaching words, expressions and sentences in class is important. There is a limited number of new words and expressions, teachers spend much less time on them in class than on plots. However, teachers do pay great attention to them.

The third "course content" I observed in Chinese class in Fengning Hope Elementary School was the teaching of knowledge. By knowledge I mean knowledge beyond the Chinese language. I was amazed that in Chinese class, the language was used as a tool to such a deep level and that Chinese language teachers used the language so naturally and unknowingly to teach the knowledge of other areas. Zhao Ruiyin taught fables. The fables were not knowledge in the true sense of the term, they were philosophic admonitions close to knowledge and didn't fall into the category of language and literature. The Chinese language textbooks of elementary schools have many fables. They all come from classical Chinese writings and have been translated into modern Chinese. Fables in modern Chinese

have an important place in the Chinese language textbooks at elementary schools. A look at the available Chinese language textbooks for whole-day students at six-year elementary schools in the 1980s shows that eight texts contain 16 fables. I don't have all the textbooks for the current 1990s, but the textbooks available show that they too contain many fables. I have no idea why there are so many fables in Chinese language textbooks. If they are in classical Chinese language, I may understand they are designed to teach classical Chinese language, but they are all in modern Chinese. If they are designed to teach how fables were written, one of them will do, because fables were all written almost the same way. The only reason may be to make students wiser, but this should not be the main target of Chinese class; it should be the target of social class. Chinese class should have its own targets. I won't elaborate on the fables and how Zhao Ruiyin taught them; what I want to discuss is why Chinese class overemphasizes history and scientific knowledge. The story "The General and Premier Make Peace" Li Jianhua taught originates from "Biography of Lian Po and Lin Xiangru" in *Historical Records* and falls under the category of historical knowledge, so do the stories she taught in her lectures about the seven warring states and the powerful state of Qin. Xiu Guichun explained in class what animals used their tails for and how they regenerated their parts, which was marvelous. Her class came to an end with reviewing "How many different kinds of animals' tails did we learn about in today's class?" and "What did you learn in today's class?" and exclaiming: "See how much you learned in today's class. Everyone needs to keep studying hard." So that was all about knowledge and impressive. Ms. Xiu Guichun felt that everything came naturally in her class and didn't think there was anything wrong about that. A closer look at her text, I found it designed to spread scientific knowledge, so the way Xiu Guichun taught it was faithful to the text.

Another "course content" that was thoroughly taught was the "political and moral education" that had infiltrated into the Chinese language textbooks. The Chinese language textbooks currently in use at elementary schools contain many texts featuring Chinese leaders, heroes and revolutionary history. With these texts, political and moral education does not merely infiltrate into courses; on the contrary, it directly indoctrinates the students. Political and moral education furnished in texts such as "The General and Premier Make Peace," "Two Fables," and "The Gecko Borrows a Tail" is very much explicit. These three texts are about ancient Chinese and animals, so it is inconvenient to directly furnish political and moral education, but moral education and indirect political education were provided repeatedly in class. When it came to the gecko referring to the fish, bull and swallow respectively as Big Sister Little Fish, Uncle Bull and Aunt Swallow, Xiu Guichun stressed that her students should realize that the gecko was very polite. When it came to the animals couldn't give a part of their body to someone else, she encouraged her students to lean their pencils to someone in need. When Zhao Ruiyin taught the text "Losing the Sheep Then Repairing the Pen," she concluded that it was advisable to correct the mistake immediately, and at the same time, she provided moral education by means of the text "Covering One's Ears While Stealing a Bell," which I analyzed above. According to Li Jianhua, the text "The

General and Premier Make Peace" gave prominence to the moral characters that were observed in present-day China such as patriotism and giving primary concern to the overall interest and she ended her class with providing moral education: she criticized the player who knocked his rival down. should charge in the last basketball competition at the school and called for unity. This method of providing political and moral education to students by integrating the texts and realities was also used skillfully and naturally by Li Jianhua and was well accepted by the students. Providing political and moral education has probably become a paradigm of Chinese language teaching in high and elementary schools in China today. I read a book by a veteran Chinese language teacher and what he said was similar to Li Jianhua's political and moral education:

> However, when I attended a teacher's lecture on "Litchi Honey," I was enlightened.
>
> When it came to "providing political and moral education based on reality, the teacher did not simply stated it was necessary to learn from the bee. On the contrary, he asked the students in a tone they would readily accept, "Will you tell me which is good, the bees or the wasps?"
>
> "The bees."
> "Right. Then who should we learn from?"
> "The bees."
>
> "Sure. We should learn from the bees." The teacher appreciated her students' rely. Then he asked in an unusually kind voice, "Who can tell me what we should learn from them?"
>
> I understood that the teacher was asking the students to review the dispositions of the bees, the "lovely little creatures," to prepare for political and moral education in the next link of teaching. However, the students weren't aware of that, and innocently answered her question:
>
> "We should learn from them in becoming united and fraternal."
> "Yes!" the teacher got excited.
> "You're right. We should learn from them in becoming hardworking, brave, united and fraternal. But…"
>
> Suddenly, the teacher said in a regretful and caring voice, "Some of you aren't even on speaking terms with each other for nothing, and dodge their duty."
>
> Then the teacher stopped speaking abruptly. Silence and a survey of all the students followed.
>
> At this time, I realized that some boy students hung their heads and two girls brightened up. They peeped at each other but dared not to look into each other's eyes. That suggested they felt ashamed and came to know better, and eventually they looked at each other and smiled shyly.
>
> In addition to the proper way the teacher talked like a child, the transition from the text to reality, and from reality to the political and moral education was so natural that there wasn't any sign of forcing.[11]

[11]Zhang (1988), pp. 18–20.

Let's forget about whether it is true that "there wasn't any sign of forcing," this is evidence that the method of providing political and moral education by shifting from the text to the reality of the class and taking advantage of the people and events discussed in the text has become a Chinese language teaching model. Fengning Hope Elementary School uses this model and observes the rule that schools in China are run like factories.

The plots of texts, words and expressions, non-Chinese language knowledge, and political and moral education are the four basic elements of the Chinese class in Fengning Hope Elementary School. Different teachers and different texts may use a different proportion of these elements, but it is clear that these elements are predominant in Chinese class. Except for Xiu Guichun reminding her students to read "crawl and crawl" in the right tone and revealing how the fish, bull and swallow felt, which was literary to some extent, there is basically no place for literature in Chinese class in this school. The neglect of literature or esthetics is a serious problem I found when I sat in on classes. The Chinese language teachers here are not very much aware of the literary nature Chinese classes should have. As a result, their students fail to achieve true, intellectual appreciation of their Chinese language texts and can only get fun, if any, from the plots of the plots of the texts. I was surprised to find that the students spent most of their class hours on reviewing repeatedly plots. Just like "taking advantage of the texts to provide political and moral education based on reality," this Chinese language teaching method of discussing the plots of the texts is not unique to village schools like Fengning Hope Elementary School. I read a speech written by Mr. Zhao Xueqian from Xuanwu District, Beijing, who had taught Chinese language at elementary school for 25 years. He also revealed the similar phenomena in Chinese class in elementary school in Beijing, "So far the most common teaching method is the 'questions and answers approach' under which the teacher asks and the students answer the questions. Take the text 'Liu Hulan' for example. The teacher would begin by asking, 'Who is the article written for?' A student puts up his hand and says, 'Liu Hulan.' The teacher asks, 'How do you know?' 'It is entitled Liu Hulan.' The teacher continues to ask, 'When did the story take place?' 'On January 4, 1947.' 'How do you know?' 'The first sentence of the text says that.' This goes on and on based on the text. I don't know why this is done."[12] Questions are asked and answers are given in order to review the plots. This is commonly known as the "questions and answers approach." Mr. Zhao Xueqian wondered why this is done. In fact, this teaching method is designed, as I said earlier, to kill time. As a matter of fact, the students can understand the plots of a text by reading it once plus the teacher repeating it once, so it is unnecessary to repeatedly ask and answer questions about them. Teachers stick to this practice because they have nothing else to say or do in class, and repeating the plots may be the easiest way to kill time. It is reasonable for Chinese class to include the Chinese language and literature, but

[12]Wang (1998), p. 48.

literary education has now be basically excluded in Chinese class. Without having to teach literature, Chinese teachers have too much time to kill, so they have to kill it by doing something people "don't know why this is done." This is an approach they have to use to be slack in work. This not the entirely the fault of teachers because elementary school Chinese textbooks are not designed to give any place to literature. Let's have a look at the six guidelines the Elementary School Chinese Department of People's Education Press has for compiling the third volume of elementary school Chinese textbooks:

1. Focus on developing students' language skills and thinking to ensure they acquire the preliminary listening, speaking, reading and writing skills and develop good habits of studying Chinese;
2. Ensure that political and moral education is provided while teaching Chinese language skills and providing basic Chinese training;
3. Do all that is possible to ensure that the texts are arranged to make it easy to teach and learn;
4. Work to improve students' ability to recognize words;
5. Work to foster students' abilities to study independently;
6. Work to foster students' abilities to observe and think.[13]

These guidelines say nothing about literature. I looked through the third volume of the textbook *Chinese*, and it is unfair to say it doesn't contain literary works, but the teaching materials and *Teachers' Teaching Guide* don't require they be taught as such; they are taken as a tool for training other skills. If the current teaching methods continue, it won't take much time to finish teaching the words and expressions and provide political and moral education, so the texts have to be repeated to kill time. To put it in Mr. Chen Yinke's words, "You can hardly kill your time without doing anything useless."

As literature is left out, teachers don't have enough to teach in class, and more importantly, they find it impossible to be subjective when giving lectures. Subjectivity is the most salient characteristic of literature and means individuality, emotions, and free thinking. Without subjectivity, teachers will lose their sense of personal power and the intellectual support for their teaching and will merely become a mouthpiece of the mainstream thinking of the country. Under these circumstances, teachers simply cannot develop affection for what they teach and will not really love it. This costs Chinese class the vividness, liveliness, and exchange of feelings that it should have. As a result, Chinese class becomes dull and boring and students have to remember texts by heart in order to answer their teacher's questions. Teachers only teach the objective knowledge that is available from texts such as words and expressions and knowledge that is not specific to Chinese language, and they even repeat time and time again plots when they do not have to. Even the political and moral education they provide based on texts is dogmatic

[13]Elementary School Chinese Department of People's Education Press (1995), pp. 1–2.

indoctrination that political class may have due to a lack of literariness, and is therefore not really inspiring and cannot cultivate students' mind. The political and moral education provided in Chinese class without literariness is actually an epitome of the political and moral education provided through Chinese society at the moment: external and poor moral and political dogmas are repeated time and time again to ensure that people's minds are reformed. This is really a stupid deception. A culture emerges only based on a true cultural process, i.e. a process of true cultural and ethical activities and intellectual development; people don't come to have belief in something or become more moral by simply repeating slogans on others' belief and moral standards. To reduce the process of true and rich cultural development to a process of repeating dogmas and slogans is a sign of cultural decline, is based on cultural decline to some extent, and will inevitably lead to greater cultural decline. Literature is an important way for achieving cultural development and the neglect of literariness in Chinese class in elementary school is exactly a sign of cultural decline.

Having critically examined the rejection of the literariness of Chinese textbooks by China's education system, I have come to the conclusion that its manifestations and reasons can be reviewed in the two ways as follows:

One is that it is intentionally rejected in curriculums, textbooks and *Teachers' Teaching Guides* and the education management system. All this is attributed to a simplistic guiding ideology. Literariness means richness and complexity, remaining true to real life, facing squarely and being sympathetic to people's real feelings and experience, which are exactly what China's cultural education system is afraid of and guarding against. China's compilers of textbooks and *Teachers' Teaching Guides* are inclined to select "good stories," articles that are very morally "pure," or papers from which it is easy to tell right from wrong and distinguish good from bad. Articles that are selected to be included in textbooks and have complexity that is unique to literature are either abridged or the teachers are required to teach in a way specified in the teachers' teaching guide. So the texts are still made simple and pure. For example, the second act of *Thunderstorm* included in a high school Chinese textbook was abridged by leaving out Fanyi, an artistically important character, in order not to mention her incest with Zhou Ping, and Chap. 18 of *Rickshaw* included in the textbook did not include the part about Huniu covering Xiaofuzi's prostitution. The Chinese Department of People's Education Press considers this guiding thought for making textbooks "pure and simple" to be "the principle of positive education": "We have selected and compiled many Chinese textbooks to eulogize the revolutionaries' lofty ideals of pursuing truth and being dedicated to the revolution; give an account of China's magnificent scenery and give expression to patriotic enthusiasm; or praise the noble quantities of great leaders. By so doing we have upheld the principle of positive education." Textbooks do not exclude love stories, but care must be taken to ensure that they serve the purpose of positive education. For example, "The Peacock Flies Southeast," "Romance of the West Chamber: Parting at the Pavilion," "Dream of the Red Chamber: Words of Love," "Romeo and Juliet," "Xiao'erhei's Marriage,"

and "The Wedding at the Execution Ground" are all about true and noble love. However, prostitution and incest should not be included in textbooks. This is why Xiaofuzi's prostitution was not included in the textbook text "Under the Scorching Sun and in the Rainstorm" and Fanyi's incest with Zhou Ping was excluded from the textbook text "Thunderstorm."[14] I am not arguing that prostitution and incest must be included in high school textbooks. The idea is that "pure and simple" texts and teaching methods have turned textbooks into propaganda material and turned education into propaganda. In fact this propaganda effort won't serve the purpose. Choosing only to provide so-called "positive education" will have difficulty exerting true and lasting positive influence on the students, and will often have the opposite effect. Positive things cannot be established unless they are imbued with real life and true feelings. As for Chinese textbooks, this can be achieved only by giving expression to literariness. In the 1970s when Liu Xinwu wrote *The Class Teacher*, absolutely "positive education" would only produce people like Xie Huimin, a tragic worshipper of what was generally believed to be good, while today it would produce weary students and hypocrites. In either case, education cannot be a success.

The other way to review the manifestations and reasons of the rejection of the literariness of Chinese textbooks is that the teaching of Chinese overemphasizes knowledge. The knowledge is defined by the teaching materials and teachers' teaching guide and reinforced in the form of examination papers similar to college entrance examination papers. By knowledge I mean words and expressions and other knowledge related and unrelated to the Chinese language. As Chinese teaching and examination focus on knowledge and knowledge related and unrelated to Chinese is standardized, there cannot be any room for literariness in Chinese class. Not only is time not allotted for literariness but also the importance of literariness is negated because the current Chinese examinations don't accept literature that approaches words and articles in a variety of ways and understands and expresses things freely. If a teacher advocates literariness in class, then he or she is ruining his or her students' destiny. When commenting on computerized grading of Chinese test papers and the standardized answers, Wang Li, who had been graduated as a postgraduate student from the Chinese Department of Beijing Normal University and taught at a Beijing high school for a year, wrote:

> …but it seems that a common fact is ignored: Chinese is not the same as science. It may be advisable to use computerized grading of science test papers, and that's not true with Chinese tests. Chinese class is not merely about abstract formulas, theorems, definitions and concepts, but rather it is about the rich and colorful works that reveals the general thought, feelings and talent of the authors. This shows that Chinese class is full of ambiguous things that can be understood in a number of ways. Different people may have different ideas about the main purpose of the texts as well as about individual sentences and

[14]Wang (1998), p. 157.

words. It cannot be an either-or decision. I have a simple example here: an exercise about how to understand the text of Zhu Ziqing's "Staring after My Father":

Choose the correct answer by analyzing the following sentences based on the context:

1. (omitted)
2. Well, I recall that I was so smart back then. ( )

A. He is happy that he was smart.
B. He means the opposite and regrets that he was stupid.
C. He hated himself for not understanding how his father felt about him.
D. He believes that he was too clever by half.

According to the teaching material, the "correct" answer is C. However, anyone with some experience in reading may find that by this sentence, Zhu Ziqing meant at least two things: B is one of them, and C is the other. Even D could be reasonable. If the sentence is understood this way, we may have a better understanding of the complicated feelings the middle-aged author had when he looked upon the past and things had changed.[15]

What Wang Li discussed here is how the teaching of Chinese "knowledge" in a "standardized" way kills literariness.

Against this backdrop of the general education system and teaching methods, it may be easy to understand why there is a lack of literariness in Chinese class at Fengning Hope Elementary School and the consequences it has. It is inadvisable to reproach the school for that on an individual basis. I have made it the target of my sample survey as a measure for acquiring a better understanding of the cultural ecology of schools in China. Making Fengning Hope Elementary School a sample is uniquely important because it provides the information about how it implements the general teaching methods and educational guidelines when it is in a normal state. Over the past couple of years, the discussion of education has been focused on urban schools, not rural ones. When I am measuring the teaching at Fengning Hope Elementary School in accordance with an ideal criterion, I still remember a basic fact: at a time when China's urban and rural structures remain separated and there is a great discrepancy between urban and rural areas, Fengning Hope Elementary School, a rural school, is doing just as well as an urban school in teaching up to standard and can implement the course curriculum. That means it has already done its best. Although this instruction according to government standard has a variety of defects as mentioned earlier (I will deal with them later in my survey records and analysis), it will be arduous and cost dearly to change this kind of instruction, and it is inadvisable to impose this on a rural elementary school. Fengning Hope Elementary School should be commended for its avoiding the unintentional modifications of the courses, avoiding content directly in conflict with the course curriculum as a result of false knowledge, and in plain language, for carrying out the defective instruction according to government standard. In addition, I am criticizing the defects of this instruction according to government standard from the perspective how people should be trained through education. Taking into consideration another function of the education, that is, the promotion

[15]Wang (1998), p. 16.

of people, we may find that by providing instruction according to government standard, rural schools are of unique, positive significance. I will discuss this later in great details. As backgrounds and circumstances vary, when a universal thing is made universal in different regions, there will be common universal effects and at the same time there will be different unique effects: this is what a real world should be.

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Chapter 4
The Transmission of Culture in the Classroom (II)

In Fengning Hope Elementary School, students have a high level of participation in class, but only in one way: they only stand up to speak in response to teachers' questions. In Chinese class, I saw only once that Xiu Guichun used a seminar in her class as it is often the case in foreign classes. Xiu Guichun organized a seminar at which students discussed why the fish, bull and swallow didn't lend their tails to the gecko. Because the text provided ready answers to this question, the students didn't have to analyze and come up with solutions, and those who were familiar with the text knew the answers. At the seminar two students who shared the same table repeated to each other what the text said. This was actually a false seminar at which failed to communicate with their peers. This shows that Chinese schools do encourage seminars of students in class, but they are forgotten, lightened, or distorted because Chinese teachers and students are not used to them. In Chinese class in Fengning Hope Elementary School, there used to be a Chinese-style interaction between students. That happened in the class of Zhao Ruiyin when she asked her student Li Yanli to stand up and lead her classmates in reading new words. This practice is readily accepted and quite useful: the students feels it is something different and approachable, and those who are asked to lead the reading feel honored and encouraged. In addition, this makes it possible for teachers to spot the errors of the students and correct them. This time Zhao Ruiyin identified three errors by Li Yanli, followed by all her classmates. She corrected them for the benefit of all the students. Except for these two examples of interaction between students, all I saw in Chinese class here was teachers asking students questions.

The interactions between the teacher and the students take three forms. One is that the teacher asks a student to stand up and answer questions, another is that the teacher asks questions and all the students give the answer simultaneously; and the rest is that the teacher asks questions and the students give all sorts of answers. The first form is very common. When the teacher asks a question, many students put up their hand to offer an answer. Students are eager to answer questions in

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S. Li, *The "States" in Villages*, China Academic Library,
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Chinese class: you can see a forest of hands raised as soon as the teacher asks a question. The students here don't put up their hands noiseless. On the contrary, they strike their elbows against the table, making loud noises. The teacher asks one of the students with their hands up. If he or she gives a correct answer without difficulty, the teacher would urge his or her classmates to give him or her a big hand. This encouragement is very effective and could be an important reason why the students rush to put up their hands. This naïve encouragement and reward even has the same effect for first- and fifth-grade students. When all the students give the answer simultaneously, the question is very simple, or is not a question in the true sense of the word. These questions are asked as hints for the students to review their texts, and sometimes the teacher has the students complete her statements, which gets the students and the teacher closer to each other. Questions asked under the third form of interaction to which the students give all sorts of answers have to be answered after a careful thought. For example, Xiu Guichun asked why the gecko couldn't crawl quickly. The text didn't have a ready answer to that question. The students had to brainstorm and generalize and discover things, so they gave different answers sooner or later. These questions are good, but they were few of them in class. There were few questions that the students couldn't answer, which is both gratifying and disheartening. I think the most colorful interaction in Chinese class in Fengning Hope Elementary School was Xiu Guichun asking her students to imitate the movements. As a result, verbs such as "struggle," "wave," "swish," and "swing" that are essential in Chinese and useful in people's daily lives were firmly understood by students during the performances.

The biggest drawback of these interactions in Chinese class is that no students ask the teacher questions. The class is active, and is much more active than what I imagined, but there are only one-way activities. This keeps the students in a fixed condition of being passive to receive instruction. The teacher is obviously imposing: she stands on the platform raised high in front of the students; even if she leaves the platform, she is still superior over her students. I found that when she moved around the classroom, the students she approached quivered in reaction, suggesting her presence had put pressure on the students which made them nervous.

The students answer questions mostly by quoting the textbooks. Xiu Guichun didn't like her students answering her questions by quoting the textbooks and made it clear that the question—why didn't the fish, bull and swallow lend the gecko their tail—must be answered in their own words, but the students ignored her. The teacher cannot do anything about these persistent habits of her students. One extreme example is that when Zhao Ruiyin asked her third-grade students in class: in the fable "Covering One's Ears While Stealing a Bell," what did the man trying to steal a bell think and do and what happened to him eventually, a student answered simply by reciting the text starting from "Two Fables": "Covering One's Ears While Stealing a Bell." So it was gratifying to notice that in a class for the fifth grade, Wang Lizhi gave the answer that "Lin Xiangru was afraid that if Lian Po saw him Lian Po would create a scene and things would get out of hand."

Answers like this in the students' own words express their desire for freedom of expression. Even a small word like this will demonstrate the glory of individuality and the ability of the students to independently use language. However, students are seldom seen expressing their individuality in slang like this. Not being sure of whether that was legitimate, Wang Lizhi said that hesitantly and unsurely in a very low voice.

It is often the case that after class students talk the way they cite textbooks in class, so this shows their texts have exerted great influence on them. On the afternoon of June 26, I wanted to talk with Wang Chunlei, the third-grade class leader, in his classroom. It was raining cats and dogs outside with thunder, but the rest of the students were led by the teacher to stay in the corridor outside the classroom so that I could be with Wang Chunlei alone. Wang Chunlei was a teenager, but he talked like an adult and a book. When I asked how long he had been a class leader, he answered, "Approximately four years." When I wanted to know if it was an easy job to be class leader, he said, "It is OK. Guiding these classmates is my responsibility. I need to do that." I asked if it was difficult to be the leader of a preschool class, and he said, "It wasn't that difficult because they all knew what they were doing." I praised him for his essays, he responded solemnly, "Thanks." When I asked why he wanted to be a painter, he told me that that was "for the sake of my country." During the talk he sat upright and used formal language that is often used in diplomatic talks. Later on, it wasn't until his classmates returned from the corridor to join in the talks and talked at once that he returned to oral language. When they used oral language, these students, including Wang Chunlei, appeared to be more free in style and sounded natural and frank. This shows that classroom place restrictions on people's dispositions and even these restrictions have not ruined their dispositions.

A careful analysis shows that the students here alternate between two types of language. One is literary language, and the other is colloquial language. Chinese written language was already changed from classical language to the vernacular 80 years ago, and with a special source of its population, Fengning speak a language almost the same as the Putonghua based the Beijing dialect. However, here in Fengning, there is a sharp difference between literary and colloquial languages. Literary language is characterized by written words and phrases, standards words and phrases, positive words and phrases from China's mainstream ideology and scientific names of things and complete sentences, while colloquial language is characterized by words and phrases of dialects, colloquial words and phrases and natural intonations. Much of literary language can be incorporated into conversation to make the conversation more literary. Moreover, colloquial words and phrases can also be included in writings to make them simple and natural. However, in Chinese schools, even in rural schools such as Fengning Hope Elementary School, more literary language is included in conversations than colloquial words and phrases are incorporated into writings. I have found that teachers at Fengning Hope Elementary School, especially those better educated ones who graduated from colleges, use literary language in conversations both in and after class. After years of training, they can skillfully use literary language in their

oral language. The students, however, still have to learn how to do this, and they still have difficulty talking with someone in literary language after class. In the 30-min talk with me, Wang Chunlei, a class leader of the third grade, had enough when he struggled to keep the conversation literary. This was very demanding, so he was always nervous, weighed his words before he spoke, and coughed from time to time in search of proper words. It wasn't until after large numbers of students returned to the classroom to join in our conversation that the conversation was restored to a colloquial state and the atmosphere was relaxed. This released Wang Chunlei and he began to speak in a relaxed and natural manner.

I find that an important target of education at school is to turn literary language colloquial. Basically literary language is used in class: the texts, the language teachers use in their instruction and questions, and the language students answer these questions are literary. After class, students still use literary language on all formal occasions, including their conversations with strangers. As time goes by, the daily conversations of students are infiltrated and influenced by literary language, which amounts to the so-called "classroom tone." At school, the relationship between literary and colloquial languages is in fact a relationship between the educator and the educated, between the transformer and the transformed, and what is legitimate and what is not. Under these circumstances, it is easy to understand why Wang Lizhi, a student of the fifth grade, was afraid and lacked confidence when he answers a question in dialect in class. This kind of answer at class can only be an offhand, impulsive remark. The world constituted by literary language is exactly what the country's education system, education authorities and educators want to impose on the students. That world is composed of standard knowledge, orthodox ideas and normal feelings which come from the country, the cities and invisible cultural traditions. The world constituted by colloquial language is a world that already exists before education is offered, its main component is the dialects of regions and classes (dialects of provincial capital cities, rural areas, and farmers) and it represents simple, countrified and ideas, feelings, wisdom, and lifestyles that have not been affected through the cultural system and comes from small talks when people get together to spend hot summer and cold winter days, and from local performances including *bangzi* performances. The difference and interaction between literary and colloquial languages and between the two worlds they each represent are notable phenomena in rural education. By nature, the world of literary language as against the world of colloquial language is an artificial world. It was not produced here in the countryside; it came from the outside, so it is unnatural not only in the countryside but also within school enclosures. It must be spread in extraordinary manners which include school organization and discipline and the way class is conducted as well as students' imitation, recitation and repetition. Being keenly aware that by nature, the world of literary language is artificial and unnatural, schools are very firm in implementing these extraordinary manners. Schools have standard ceremonies, enforce quasi-military discipline, and impose classroom instruction, all of which embody their firmness. It is also because by nature, the world of literary language is artificial and unnatural, rural students consider them to be from outside and strange to them, so they come to

learn it in rigid, inflexible and listless way. This is exactly why the students cannot answer questions without repeating what the textbook says.

That's how students answer questions, and things are worse when they write essays. As literary language is something from the outside, the students have difficulty using it. As a result, they copy it mechanically in their essays in a stereotyped way. In leading a natural life in the countryside, students do not have to write essays, but they write them to meet the need of the world of literary language, not the need of rural people. The need to write essays is created out of thin air, so it is obviously quite unnatural. The students at Fengning Hope Elementary School rely heavily on the world of literary language in their essays and most of them are not aware enough of the need to use colloquial language to enrich and improve literary language. This is proof that they have been deeply overwhelmed by the authority of the world of literary language. However, they are not as familiar with that world as they are fond of it, so almost all of them imitate and copy it in a stereotyped way. In most cases, students of Fengning Hope Elementary School are asked to write essays about a person, an event, or something one has, write a letter or diary, or write about a picture or article. Their essays have much in common. When they wrote about something they had encountered, most of them said about the same thing. Obviously they copied essays from each other. Fengning Hope Elementary School has a library, so the school makes it a rule for students at and above the third grade to write something about what they read from it once a week. In most cases, the students simply copy something from a book or an article, and many noted down their reactions to what they read. What they write about what they read is quite similar with their essays and is often full of clichés and grammatically sentences. For example, someone surnamed Yu from the fifth grade wrote page-long pieces on his reactions to what he read. He started every piece by "Today I read an article and what it impressed me the most is that…," which was followed by quotations from the article. He persisted in doing that without exception. In addition, he didn't use interlanguage and quotation marks so that it was impossible to distinguish the "I," the student from the "I," the author of the article. The best essays the students here wrote are those that used literary language to give a complete account of something without any grammar mistakes. I have presented here three of probably the best essays written by students of the fifth grade as they are in order to show how well the students of a rural elementary school understand, absorb and use literary language.

My Reactions to "A Night's Work"

Yu Xiufang

Today I read the article "A Night's Work" about Premier Zhou staying up all night reviewing reports and the people's love for him. When it came to "he pointed at the one third of a meter thick pile of reports and said, 'I will complete the review of these reports tonight," I couldn't help feel sorry for him. How many pages will that be? My dear Premier, you really work hard for this country. As I read on, I imagined how the Premier lived and worked. His bedroom had an ordinary bed, a not-so-big table and several chairs and was full of books and reports at his bedside. His pajama had been patched many times. He often worked continuously late into night, so he missed his dinner. His staff had to heat it

several times before it was finally served. Even when he was desperately ill, he couldn't put state affairs aside; he slept only two or three hours a night as he had to review reports. Whenever these moving scenes appear before my eyes, I can't help but burst into passionate tears. However, I feel proud of this good Premier of the people. He was the pride of the Chinese people.

My Thoughts on "My Comrade-in-Arms Qiu Shaoyun"

Wang Jingjing

"My Comrade-in-Arms Qiu Shaoyun" is my favorite text from the textbook. It is about Qiu Shaoyun and his comrades-in-arms ambushing in the underbrush only 60 meters from enemy front positions in support of a general attack by a large unit scheduled for the next evening. The enemy took precautionary measures by firing incendiaries at random. One of them at incendiaries set Qiu Shaoyun on fire. His padded jackets were burning, but he stayed there motionless despite of severe pains until he died. His death boosted the morale of his comrades-in-arms. When the battle came, it took only 20 min for our troops to eliminate all of enemy soldiers and won the battle. This text taught me a lesson: we should learn from Qiu Shaoyun for his observance of disciplines and defiance of sacrifice for the sake of the victory of the battle. We must be self-disciplined both at and outside school even if there is oversight.

How the Article "What the Little Bird Needs" Inspires Me

Wang Baishi

I read the article "What the Little Bird Needs" today. It is about a little bird taken captive by humans when it was catching pests. The bird carried out a hunger strike and eventually got the little girl Xiaohong to release it back to nature. The text set me to think that nature should be shared by both humans and animals. However, humans not only eat what they produce on Earth but also have an eye on animals in the wild, wishing to eat them or to keep them as pets. In the beautiful nature, the great Earth and forests need the protection of humans, so do animals. We should cherish and protect them to keep our environment always green. Let us work together to protect Earth on which we all share.

Now I present two more essays written by students of the third grade here before comparing and analyzing these pieces altogether.

My Thoughts on "Vanka" (Abridged)

Wang Jiamei

…Vanka led a dog's life. We have enough to eat and drink, but under capitalism people led a dog's life. Vanka lived a miserable life at that time. This should be good reason that we should cherish everything we have now, including flowers, grass and trees as well as water and food. They didn't have all these good things we have now, so we need to value what we have.

A Diary: April 21, 1999

Liu Tingting

Today I came back to school after I had lunch at home. When I just fell asleep, Zhang Guangyang kicked me, but I didn't say anything to him. After a while, he poured water on me from his ice bag. I told him to stop, but he suddenly hit me and I cried. I thought to myself: I have to report this to the teacher when she is here. But I was afraid that he would hit me again on my way back home if I did that. So I didn't mention it to the teacher as if nothing had happened. I picked up some friends and played outside. After a while, it was time for class, so we returned for class.

It is justifiable to say that the three pieces by fifth grade students evolved from the currently prevailing system of literary language. The first two are about traditional subject matters: they are about revolutionary traditions and discuss a Chinese leader and hero, and the last one is about a sensitive topic: environmental protection. In the piece about Zhou Enlai, "the one third of a meter thick pile of reports," "an ordinary bed, and a not-so-big table," "his pajama had been patched many times," "he often worked continuously late into night, so he missed his dinner. His staff had to heat it several times before it was finally served," "Even when he was desperately ill, he couldn't put state affairs aside," and "he slept only two or three hours a night as he had to review reports"—all these are what Chinese mainstream media say about Zhou Enlai. The student Yu Xiufang accepted all these factors. In addition, the expressions "the people," "moving scenes," "can't help but *burst into passionate tears*," "feel proud," good Premier of the people," and "the pride of the Chinese people" are all literary adjectives, verbs or fixed collocations commonly used in China's mainstream media. Yu Xiufang, a student from a farmer's family, conscientiously and painstakingly accepted these things that are poles apart from her life. For example, she could never have seen pajamas; when she wants to say shed tears, she would never have said "burst into passionate tears." However, she did manage to compile all these into an essay. There isn't anything striking about the essay, but it is after all free from low-level mistakes such as wrong words or grammatically wrong sentences. This is an achievement a rural elementary school can feel proud of in its effort to teach literary language. The piece about Qiu Shaoyun may not so good as this one but it sounds similar. The piece about the little bird contains the latest news about literary language: an aspiration that China didn't have in the past. It will be interesting to compare this piece with the essays students wrote several decades ago about doing away with the four pests—rats, sparrows, flies and mosquitoes: they have diametrically different themes, but both were based on the mainstream literary language. Contemporary literary language is a conservative yet changing system. It contains many things China has been advocating, such as the worship of revolutionary leaders and combat heroes, and keeping renewing them to evolve with time. For example, doing away with sparrows has been replaced by protecting birds. It is in this strange literary language that rural children who have grown up in a system of colloquial language are swimming with great difficulty and doing their best to swim farther.

However, the colloquial language that these students are most familiar with and can use without difficulty has not been completely eliminated in their study and lives; it keeps cropping up from time to time and is used by the students to express their true feelings. For example, the piece entitled "My Thoughts on 'Vanka'" is a merger of colloquial and literary languages: its basic idea ("Capitalism is bad whereas new society is good" came from literary language, but its words and expressions came from colloquial language. For example, it used "have enough to eat and drink" instead of "are well fed and well clothed." In this piece colloquial language replaced literary language to set the tone for style. In addition, the statement "Vanka led a dog's life" is not a standard way of recounting in literary

language as the standard way will not use "dog" to describe a poor child subject to class oppression. Although "dog" is used to mean miserable, but in literary language it is derogatory when used for people and means evil. "My Thoughts on 'Vanka'" shows that the author really believes it is a good idea to express her thoughts in literary language, but she doesn't have enough literary language to express her true thoughts, so she unknowingly used colloquial language. The diary by Liu Tingting is different. She used colloquial language to express her ideas. "Just fell asleep," "kicked me," "didn't say anything to him," "suddenly hit me," and "have to report this to the teacher"—all these local dialects. In addition, by the standard of literary language, the event the author recounted is very negative and even "meaningless" so that it is not worth writing about. This essay would definitely have been graded as "bad." However, the author used her own words to recount something that really happened, how it happened and what she thought. Many may like it for its truthfulness.

Nevertheless, few essays by the students of Fengning Hope Elementary School can match the diary by Liu Tingting and Wang Jiamei's thoughts on a novel. Most of their essays work to manage literary language. Few of the essays they wrote in literary language are like those by Yu Xiufang and two others that read smoothly. This shows that rural children have difficulty learning and using the literary language from the outside.

After class, I talked with teachers of the second through fifth grades about what they thought of the textbooks, especially Chinese textbooks, and how they should teach them. The Chinese textbook (Vol. X) for the fifth grade includes Mao Zedong's poem "Dabaidi—to the tune of Pu Sa Man," which reads:

> Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet—
> Who is dancing, waving this colored ribbon against the sky?
> The sun returns slanting after the rain
> And hill and pass grow a deeper blue.
> A furious battle once raged here,
> The village walls, bullet-scarred,
> Now adorn hill and pass
> And make them doubly fair.

I asked Ms. Li Jianhua how she taught the poem. She said that she would discuss how the older generation of revolutionaries, through fierce battles, created revolutionary base areas and liberated China, as well as the Yan'an spirit. However, she didn't mention what the poem really meant and how Mao Zedong, a revolutionary, eulogized war. The first page of the Chinese textbook (Vol. VI) for the third grade features a color picture of bronze statue of an older and a younger Red Army soldiers, dressed shabbily, leaning against each other during the Long March, with the older one playing the flute. I asked Ms. Zhao Ruiyin how she taught this statue and she told me that the picture was about the difficult years during the war and urged the students to learn from the older generations and value the happy life we have today. However, if we look closer at this statue, we may find that although the older and younger soldiers are shabbily dressed, holding their guns in their

hands and sitting on the ground and the picture is named "Hard Years," the underlying detail is that the older soldier is playing the flute for the younger one. This shows that they love life, but not complaining about their hardships in order to contrast past bitterness with present happiness. The explanations by the teachers about these two texts led to doubt whether all the texts featuring the revolutionary spirit and history are taught under fixed teaching models in rural schools to carry on "revolutionary traditions" without looking at the greater details. This kind of generalized teaching is a result of using the fixed teaching model. The model may have also been encouraged and supported by the teaching materials and teachers' teaching guides. The universal application of this model may lead to the cut of the rich content of the text to make it dry. One more example is that according to the text "A Green Office" in the sixth volume of the Chinese textbook for elementary school (I), when V.I. Lenin was on exile abroad, he disguised himself as a worker scything in the meadow. Every day he sat on the wild meadow and wrote his revolutionary works. I believe that the text is about the romanticism Lenin had during his revolutionary career, but Ms. Zhao Ruiyin thought that the text meant to tell the students how revolutionaries worked and struggled under hard conditions because that was what all the texts in the unit were about.

I asked Ms. Zhao some questions that seemed weird to her. There is a text entitled "Chrysanthemum Study," which was Mao Zedong's former residence at Zhongnanhai, Beijing. When it comes to Mao Zedong's bedroom, the text features two things: one is a pajama laden with patches, and the other is a high pile of books on more than half of the bed. I asked her which the students were more interested in, the pajama or the books. She told me it was the pajama. I thought this was probably because rural children believed it was strange and unexpected for Mao Zedong, a great man, to wear that pajama. In addition, the highest criterion by which rural people judge an official is how moral, clean and honest they are; they don't think it is important whether an official does a lot of reading or not.

A related question I asked Ms. Zhao was about the text "The Great Hall of the People." The text did everything it could to describe how stately the hall is. It was all about how good the materials were, how delicately it was built, and how its banquet hall was beautifully decorated in a tone that luxury and wealth was extolled. I asked Zhao if the text would make the students believe that the hall was too extravagant compared with Mao Zedong's patched pajama. Zhao did not agree, believing that the students would only know from the text what the hall has. I asked her how the students felt when they read this text about the hall. She told me they were proud. This answer wasn't a surprise. Elementary school teachers and students are all used to understanding their texts positively. Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai wearing pajamas made the students feel proud of them (see the students' essays), so did the stateliness of the Great Hall of the People, and the students would not challenge the contrast between them. The teachers and students are accustomed to looking up to the texts; they will never examine them critically. They believe that all texts are right and well written. This was exactly what I thought when I was young.

There is also a text entitled "Sanwei Study." It is about Lu Xun's school life, giving prominence to Lu Xun carving the word "early" in his desk to remind him to come to school early. I asked Zhao what she said to her students about Lu Xun. She said that she told them he was a writer and studied hard during his childhood. She didn't say anything about the ideas contained in his works. "That will be going too far," she admitted. When teaching the text about Soong Ching-ling refuting American's remarks despising China, the teachers didn't tell their students about Soong's life and her relationship with the Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China. When they taught "A Green Office," they didn't say anything about the October Revolution and the history of the Soviet Union. "In teaching texts, we deal with the issues they are about on their own merits," Zhao said, "and only brief the students on the most essential background. We won't go too far for the students to understand and take." If the texts are taught by dealing with the issues they are about on their own merits, we can imagine based on the texts what the elementary school students may think of the people we are familiar with: Mao Zedong writes poems, wears a patched pajama, loves reading, digs a well for the peasants, carries water for them in secret, and recruits two poor children into the army. Zhou Enlai works late into night, is dressed in a patched pajama, gives up his life jacket to a little girl when the plane was about to crash, and enjoys the Water Splashing Festival with the Dai people. Lu Xun studies hard at school. Soong Ching-ling is very patriotic when she was in the United States. We don't know how true the story of Mao Zedong carrying water for peasants in secret is and why all the details of Zhou Enlai participating in an event celebrating the Water Splashing Festival are given. However, as the current Chinese teaching method attaches great importance to influencing the students through Chinese textbooks, it is dangerous for the teachers not to tell their students about the major experiences and ideas of the historical characters in their texts. Anyway, it is inappropriate to make the students believe that Mao Zedong was a good example of selflessness as Lei Feng was believed to be.

I also discussed with Ms. Zhao another text entitled "A Small Soccer Competition." This is an essay explaining a painting of children playing football as well as their spectators. I noticed that it was a painting of white people while the essays mentioned red scarves for young pioneers. This was obviously a painting from the former Soviet Union or an Eastern European country. I asked Zhao if students wanted to know why red scarves had something to do with foreigners and asked about the socialist camp. She told me they didn't. The students didn't pay attention to these things and they took the painting to be about something in China. "It doesn't matter much to the students who the illustration is featuring, Chinese or foreign," Zhao said, "what is important is to let them learn about the movements and expressions of those featured in the painting." It was a pity the students weren't curious about these issues, but it is quite evident that the schools and the country's entire education system wants to make the world simpler. Ms. Zhao also told me that every unit of the Chinese textbook had two themes. One was about political education designed to encourage the students to be patriotic, carry out the revolutionary traditions, and love science. The other was about the

training in the fundamentals of Chinese including how to divide an article into different paragraphs and improve the students' reading speed.

Something from my discussion with the teachers that aroused my great interest was the influence TV has on the students and school education. When I talked with Ms. Li Jianhua, a Chinese teacher of the fifth grade, about the combat heroes featured in the textbook such as Huang Jiguang, Dong Cunrui, and Qiu Shaoyun, I asked her what influence these people had on the students. In their open discourse such as essays, the students said a lot about how they had been influenced, but I wanted to know if they had really been influenced. Li gave me a contradictory answer. She said that the students had watched these stories, so they "don't think the texts are strange or rare." However, they thought they had nothing to do with them, Li continued, "They didn't think the stories were so rare that they doubted, 'Is this true? Is this a fiction?'" That they alternated between rare and not rare shows that they actually had long become familiar with these stories and began to doubt if they were true. Li also said when she studied these at elementary school, she "felt they were rare and believed they were true" (she was born in 1963). The relationship between "rare and convinced" discussed here has much to do with a key issue faced in school education, i.e. how relevant the number of accesses people have to information is to the efficiency of school education. Li and I are peers. When we were elementary school students, we didn't have TV to watch in the countryside, and even radios were rare. The teachers and textbooks were almost our only access to knowledge and information, so we believed that what we heard in class and what we read from textbooks were "rare" and we were deeply convinced that they were true. They had striking influence on us. Without any other access to information, the teachers were sages in our eyes. What they said was authoritative. Back then, where cable broadcasting was available in the countryside, it was about what was said in textbooks and class. Publicity and activities outside school were highly identical with school education and didn't pose a threat to it. Things have changed at lot now. In school, although some new things of the times have been included in the textbooks, they are meager compared with the traditional things that have been retained. The basic structure of what is taught in education remains almost the same as before. However, although many programs, such as news, of mass media, especially TV which has been made universal, have been designed to promote publicity as before, many other programs have improved other properties. For example, they have become more entertaining. It is of particular note that the themes, subject matters, characters and pictures are vastly different from those before and during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and in the late 1970s and early 80s. In this way TV adversely affects school education. This new contradiction between TV and class is actually a contradiction between real life and education. Since the beginning of the 1990s, Chinese society drastically became secular as economic benefits increasingly became the focus of social activities, whereas the social knowledge and culture taught in class are still those taught when China was a secular society. The changes in social activities and values are most evident in TV series which are the favorite of the students.

Li Jianhua divided the content of TV programs into three parts: news, cartoons, and TV series. She believed the first two were "pure" and TV series might have problems. Most of the TV series feature tycoons, kung fu, and the underworld as well as money, sex, and love-making. All this appeals to and influences children. Even the TV series that display China's main theme of the times contain many new characters and discoveries and depict in many ways the multidimensionality and complexity of characters. All this is incompatible with the "good and pure stories" in textbooks. This embezzles the teachers. Li said that it took teachers more than several lectures to rid the influence a TV series had on the students whereas TV series could offset what they learned in class. The teachers at Fengning Hope Elementary School are worried about the two kinds of influence TV series may have on their students. One is the lifestyle and values the tycoons featured in the TV series pursue by spending lavishly on things like sex. This has made the "positive," revolutionary, and moral education in class less important. The other kind of influence is that the sexual influence exerted by the love and sex stories featured in the TV series. According to Li Jianhua, in the fifth grade "some students are beginning to do what is done in the series" and have become mature for their age. She is also afraid that many stories of TV series may have undermined the students' determination and respect for study and knowledge. They may be made by the series to believe that "one has everything if one has money" and that money is more important than knowledge and man becomes less resolved to study. According to many TV series, big money can be made by fighting for underworld syndicates, and none of the wealthy dudes or bosses featured in the series enjoy reading. If this lasts long, the students will lose their interest in studies. Li Jianhua complained that in rural China, children didn't have their separate rooms at home and they had to watch the TV programs their parents did, and as rural parents weren't keenly aware of the need to select appropriate TV programs for their children, the children watched a lot that might not be good for them. It is particular note that county and city cable TV stations air nothing but kung fu and love films. "We can't do anything about this," Li exclaimed. She didn't think there was anything she could do about the conflict between class and TV and the impact TV has on class.

TV has made the teachers less authoritative. First, the principles and values they teach are seriously undermined by TV. Second, after watching TV, the students have learned much more than they did before and come to know what is not taught in class and is not known to their teachers. From TV the students learn more about what is included in their textbooks than their teachers. The teachers usually don't watch as much TV as their students.

Nevertheless, even the teachers admit that the second phenomenon mentioned above is a good thing even though they have been made less authoritative. It is good that the students know more than they did before. In addition, watching TV helps the students study their texts. Li Jianhua gave me an example. She said that those students who had watched the TV series *The Pilgrimage to the West* and *The Water Margin* developed an interest in their texts "The Great Saint on a Par with the Emperor of Heaven" and "Wu Song Fights the Tiger." Sometimes TV also

effectively strengthens the "political education" provided by schools. For example, the news of NATO forces bombing the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia was aired on TV, the students of Fengning Hope Elementary School were on fire with zeal to fight the enemy. Other news programs on TV could hardly do that. The students of the fifth grade were studying how to write letters when news was broadcast on TV of the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia being bombed and students in Beijing and other Chinese cities holding demonstrations to protest the bombing. Fengning students learned to write letters to different addressees about, among other things, the bombing. Yu Qingjie ended her letter to her elder sister reporting on her school report, "The other day I flared up when I learned from radio and TV about the US-led NATO bombing the Chinese embassy in the Yugoslavian Federation. I am too young to do anything about it now, so I must study hard so that I will become a postgraduate. Then I will manufacture more advanced weapons to fight back the US. Well, it's getting late. Good night." Another student, Sun Haijing, simply made the bombing the subject matter of her letter to the parents of the young couple who were killed in the bombing. Here is what she wrote as evidence of how TV can influence the students.

To the Family of the Dead

Sun Haijing

Humaying Township Fengning Hope Elementary School
May 30, 1999

Dear Grandpa and Grandma:

I am Sun Haijing, a 13-year-old girl student of the fifth grade from Liuwopu Village, Humaying Township, Fengning Manchu Ethnic Autonomous County. I'm a young pioneer. Grandpa and Grandma, although I have never seen the deceased uncle and aunt, I am sure that they were good journalists who served the people wholeheartedly, they both loved their country, always followed the development of the country closely and were ready to cover anything new and tell others about it. They did everything possible to make the county develop and flourish. When I heard the news of the US-led NATO attacking the Chinese embassy in the Yugoslavian Federation and killing three of our reporters, I flared up and became sad. I wished to become a bomb and blow up the US. However, I know that I couldn't do that now, so I will turn my grief into strength and make my indignation a source of strength. I am about to graduate from elementary school. I know that people place great trust and have tremendous expectations for us who are about to enter the 21st century as successors to China's case. We will live up to their expectations. Since I could remember, I have been determined to become a learned person so that I can make a contribution to the country's prosperity. To study hard, I have to be in good health first. I am now during the period of growth and I am growing stronger. A little more than a month later, I will leave elementary school, so my study schedule is tight. Having written this letter about what I want to say to you, I feel my dream has come true. I wish you good health and good luck.

Best regards,
Sun Haijing

Both students who wrote the letters were female. He Ping, the fourth-grade head teacher, told me that after the students of the fourth grade watched the TV news of the bombing, they held a meeting about it, at which many male students

said that they wanted to be strategists when they grew up and manufacture advanced weapons for attacking the US.

The first class I sat in on at Fengning Hope Elementary School was a third-grade nature class. The class took place at a laboratory. The lab wasn't big, so the desks were closely together and four students had to share one desk. There was a name sign on the desk for every student with their name on it. This made every student believe that they were all important and grow serious about it. Close to the wall were tall cupboards with class windows and full of devices of various kinds. The big characters above the lab's blackboard were the school's motto: "Study hard, ask more questions, use your brains, and apply what you learn." On the student desks were open glass water tanks, dynamometers, hook weights, empty ink bottles, balloons, empty plastic bottles, planks, and foamcore boards. Ms. Zhao Ruiyin wore a dress and high-heeled shoes just as urban women would do whereas what the students wore was rustic: most girl students wore pink or dacron shirts and many wore headpieces of flowers while most boy students were in blue.

The nature class was about the buoyancy of water. Ms. Zhao Ruiyin asked her students to put an ink bottle full of water into the water tank before progressively lifting it from the water. "Now everybody do it," Zhao suggested, "after that, you may ask me any questions." Having done what their teacher told him to, a student asked: "Following this experiment, I would like to ask whether the bottle was light in water whereas it was heavier outside the water." Teacher: "Does everybody have the same question?" Students: "Yes." Teacher: "When scientists encounter a problem, they often conduct experiments to make observations and solve the problem. Then what should we do about our problem?" Students: "Conduct experiments." Teacher: "So let's go ahead. Will you press your foamcore board, plank, empty plastic bottle and inflated balloon into the water respectively to see how your hand feels? Take care not to press them too hard." Following the experiment, a student gave her account of it: "When I pressed the balloon in the water, I felt it wanted to go upward." Teacher: "Shall we say it wanted to pull upward?" Students: "Yes." So the teacher wrote "pull upward" on the blackboard. After the teacher made sure that her students pressed the balloon, empty plastic bottle, plank and foamcore board into the water one by one, she had one student one another stand up and review their experiments. The students gave comments of all kinds about their experiments and later the teacher corrected these comments: When you try to press something down in the water, "your hand will feel a power floating or rising. This power is called buoyance. The teacher then asked a new question: "Water gives buoyance to objects rising in it, but does it do the same to objects sinking in it?" Then the teacher asked her students to use their dynamometers and hook weights to conduct experiments and observe the difference between the readings of the dynamometers when the hood weights within and without the water. The result was that water gave buoyance to objects sinking in it too. When the students were conducting this experiment, the slides in the lab flashed a question: "How did you do it? Did anything happen?" After the students conducted these experiments time and time again, the teacher asked them to "deduce a conclusion from the experiments": Both objects rising and sinking in water is given buoyance, so

water is buoyant. After that, the teacher asked her students to give examples of buoyance in their daily life. The examples students gave were: tires in water, ships and ducks floating on water, and clothes remain on water when they are washed. The teacher went on to encourage the students to give examples of objects sinking in water being given buoyance, and when a student told her about steel pipes, she told her students about stones. Finally, the teacher guided the students to use the buoyance principle to solve a problem: how to get a table tennis ball out of a measuring bottle? Students: "Pour water into the bottle." And the students did that and get the ball out.

The basic process of the nature classes here is to create a phenomenon, observe, deduce, review, and apply. Zhao Ruiyin put it briefly as making the students better able to conduct experiments and observe things, improving their hands-on skills, raising their ability to think abstractly and enhancing their generalization ability. She said that rural students were very much interested in nature class in which experiments were conducted. She gave two reasons. One was that the class was new to them, and the other was that they often had good hands-on skills and were good at experiments. The lectures given by Zhao Ruiyin on nature were model lectures and popular at the school, and even the nature class given by He Ping, the fourth-grade head teacher, to her class in a classroom other than the lab was readily accepted. Miss He Ping: "Before class begins, I would like to ask if you have electric heaters and electric heating jugs at home." Students: "Yes, we do." "Do you know how electric heating jugs heat water?" Students: "No." Teacher: "Then let's find out. Will that be OK?" Students: "Sure." The students gave the same answer loudly and were eager to find out as what they would do was not a class but a game. And then the teacher wrote the title of the class for the day: Section Three: Electric Heating. At the beginning of the class, the teacher led the students in conducting an experiment. She asked them to connect the two ends of an iron wire to the positive and negative poles of a size A battery respectively. It wasn't long before the students felt the wire warning. Following that, they tried a cooper wire followed by an aluminum wire. The students felt all wires were getting warm. Based on the results of the experiments, the teacher and her students got the definition for the class: "The heat produced by the electric current through the conductor is called electric heat." After that, the teacher led her students to know more about the electric appliances manufactured in accordance with the principle of electric heating and they gave examples such as electric soldering irons, electrical cookers, electric heating jugs, electric irons, and electric lights. The teacher thus focused on explaining how incandescent bulbs worked. According to her, when the tungsten gets to a temperature of several thousand degrees Celsius, it glows. She also told her students what bulbs were composed of and explained why globe bulbs with screw cap and bayonet socket bulbs had different wiring points. After that, the teacher discussed the strengths and weaknesses of electric heaters in order that the students would understand that the wires of electric heaters and of other electric devices that produce electric heat could get very hot to cause fire. She also told them how to make safe use of electric heaters: they should be correctly installed in places away from inflammables and with good ventilation and should

not be used for too long continuously. When the class was drawing to a close, the teacher asked questions so that the students would go over what they had been taught in the class. Her questions were: "What is electric heating?" "What does an incandescent light glow so brightly?" "What should you pay attention to when you use electrical heaters at home?" The assignment the teacher handed out to the students was for them to "observe what electric heaters they have at home and make sure they are safely used."

After class I had a talk with Miss He Ping and she told me that her students all liked nature class and that "astronomy" and "botany" were their favorites. The planets are the farthest to them, so they are curious about them while the plants in the countryside are the nearest to them, so they find them close and the easiest to study. Nevertheless, nature class often defamiliarizes the students with things close to them. For example, the scientific names of the plants and animals may be different from those they were told at home; and the internal and external mechanisms discussed in class may be something they have never heard of. Defamiliarizing the students with things close to them makes them curious. After going over the nature textbooks of the grades of the elementary school and talking with the teachers, I've realized that there are few nature courses that are directly useful like the one about how to use electric heaters. The nature courses are mostly designed to let the students know about the facts of nature and the principles of natural science. This is quite different from the early 1970s when I was an elementary school and junior high school student. Back then, only practical knowledge about nature, physics and chemistry was taught as agricultural and industrial courses. The nature class now is obviously not about practical knowledge. For example, the Nature textbook (Vol. VI) for the third grade begins with encouraging students to raise tadpoles and take record of how they become frogs. Tadpoles are common in the countryside, but raising them isn't profitable as raising silkworms. Raising tadpoles is only designed to observe how they grow into frogs. The students, however, are more interested in this unpractical part of education.

I sat in on the math classes of the fourth and fifth grades at Fengning Hope Elementary School.

Simple equation was taught in the fourth-grade class. It was about how to use letters to represent laws for performing mathematical operations such as the associative law of addition, the commutative law of multiplication, the associative law of multiplication, and the distributive law of multiplication. This is how the teacher went about it: (1) ask the students to perform operations; (2) discuss with them what laws they used; (3) ask them to explain the laws; and (4) use letters to represent laws.

In the math class of the fifth grade Class 2 I sat in on, Miss Sun Yanlian told her students about the features, surface areas, and volumes of cuboids, cubes, cylinders and cones. When it came to their features, the teacher had her blindfolded students feel those geometric figures and decided what they were touching. This game-like instruction made the students excited. When it came to the calculation of surface areas, a student from each of the southern and northern sections did the calculation on the blackboard as a natural form competition. The teacher told her

students how to transform a geometric figure into another. She said that the side of a cylinder could be opened to turn it into a cuboid. She told the students how to calculate the volume of a cuboid, cube, cylinder, cube put together. She also raised questions to see who would be the first to answer, enlivening the atmosphere in the class. Students were eager to answers questions, but they only responded with questions by citing the textbook without difficulty. It is true that mathematical theorems are defined concisely so that the best way to give an accurate account of them is by citing the textbook.

It seems that the natural science class—nature and math—at Fengning Hope Elementary School is popular among the students. In this class the students look happy and the teachers spoke in good spirit. This shows that the class is a success. He Ping, the fourth-grade head teacher, told me that the students liked math better than Chinese. Sun Yanlian, a fifth-grade math teacher, agreed. She said that most students liked math because they thought Chinese was too difficult. Zhao Ruiyin, the third-grade head teacher, also told me that she liked math the best because math had fixed content, was easy for students, and was easy to teach. Even if a student didn't do well in one or two sections, she added, it wouldn't matter much because every new section would start by going over the previous sections. In a questionnaire I handed out to the students of Fengning Hope Elementary School, I found that they thought almost the same as their teachers. The questionnaire was handed out to all the six classes from the first to the fifth grade. With regard to the question "What is/are your favorite course(s)," the first-grade and fourth-grade students and those of the fifth-grade Class 2 gave multiple answers, so I don't know which they liked better, Chinese or math. The second and third grades and the fifth-grade Class 1 told me which was their favorite. Of the 20s-grade students, four liked Chinese better, and another four preferred math, both accounting for 20 %. Of the 34 third-grade students, two said Chinese was their favorite, taking up 6 %, while 22 loved math better, accounting for 64.7 %. Of the 39 students of fifth-grade Class 1, 15 liked Chinese, a share of 38.5 %; and ten liked math, taking up 25.6 %. Of the 93 students of these three classes, 20 liked Chinese better, accounting for 21.5 %; and 36 preferred math, taking up 38.7 %. Regarding the question "What is/are your favorite course(s)," 62 of those 93 students chose main courses as Chinese, math, society, nature, or political education, accounting for 66.7 % and representing an overwhelming majority, whereas 30 students (one of the 93 students didn't answer the question "What is/are your favorite course(s)" liked subsidiary courses better including fine arts, music, sports, English, or labor skills, accounting for 32.3 %. The students' attitude toward main and subsidiary courses is an indication of the education level of a school. If more students like subsidiary courses better at a school, it means the school cannot efficiently teach knowledge so that the students cannot but entertain themselves with game-like courses; if more students of a school like main courses better, it shows that the school is doing fine, can do better than average in teaching the most important courses and can function the way a school should. In this sense, it is significant if Chinese and math have been chosen as their students' favorites, and their choice as such is trustable and worth taking seriously.

Nevertheless, I don't know whether the attitude of the students and teachers toward Chinese, a non-scientific course, and math, a natural science course, is universal in rural schools in China. Neither am I sure what this attitude really means. I just felt obliged to record all this as a reference for broader research in this field in the future.

Before I sat in on preschool classes, I belittled them. However, after I sat in on those classes, I came to realize that the information about education and culture they contained was no less than other classes. The classroom of the preschool class is on the right side of the ground floor of the main school building. It is a complex class for both the seniors and the juniors. The seniors have taller desks and benches while the juniors have lower desks and benches—all arranged in good order. The fact that the preschool class has a classroom in the school's main building whereas the first grade has to function in the bungalow behind the building shows that the school attaches great importance to the preschool class. The north and south walls of the classroom are affixed with the paintings of the head teacher Zhao Xin. One of them is a painting of a hedgehog whose mouth is at a flower and whose tail is close to underbrush. There is an orange on one of its spines and an apple between two of its spines. Another is a painting of a house with a yellow roof and white walls. There are trees in front of the house which are reflected in the winding wide river. Miss Zhao Xin's third painting, on the rear gable, features a small brown monkey which stands on its feet as man does. It is playing something in its hands with great interest. Close to the painting of the monkey on the wall are the students' works. The works are divided into two columns. One is "Hands-On Skills" in which the students' paper folding works are found, and the other is "Let's Paint" in which the students' paintings are on display.

It is difficult to teach preschool classes. Mr. Gu Xianting, who is in charge of early childhood education at Humaying Township Central School, told me that according to the preschool syllabus, it is forbidden to teach knowledge such as Chinese characters in preschool classes, though knowledge may be imparted by means of games. In addition, at least two hours of extracurricular activities are required a day. The main courses of the preschool class are Singing, Dancing, and Painting which are designed to develop the students' intelligence and help them grow healthy. "However, the rural parents of these students don't think it is right not to teach their children any Chinese characters after paying an annual fee of 240 *yuan*," Gu Xianting told me, "so they often talk about it with the school authorities and demand that they teach something. The parents just won't accept the school not teaching their children any characters, so rural schools do teach some characters." One more problem with the preschool class is that its work is inspected at regular or irregular intervals by someone from the township central school to check the teachers' teaching programs, sit in on classes, or ask the students to paint or sing whereas no other classes have these "special treatments." In Humaying Gu Xianting is in charge of this. The preschool class enrolls five year olds for the junior class and six year olds for the senior class. Children of these ages are most restless and difficult to manage; making sure that they are safe alone puts the greatest possible pressure on the teachers. The students of the preschool

class of Fengning Hope Elementary School like crushes and are quite curious. After I sat in on one of them classes, they believed that I became their friend. After that, every time I entered the school, they would hurry toward me in groups and stop me to salute me. They spend a lot of time on outdoor activities at school so that I often run into them even when I enter the school during class hours. Sometimes I try to avoid them, but that doesn't work; they would come toward me anyway. It is of particular note that when I take pictures of the school, they would stand in front of what I want to have a picture of; I cannot do anything about it.

Before class begins, the children of the preschool class sing in a deafening voice in their classroom. They sing songs like "On the Way Back from Target Practice," "Bathing the Country in Sunshine," and "My Good Mum." "On the Way Back from Target Practice" is a soldiers song, and its lyric is as follows: "When the sun sets and red and sky is suffused with crimson, we soldiers are on our way back from target practice. The wind unfolds our red flags amid luminous colors, and our happy song is heard across the sky. When our song reaches Beijing, Chairman likes it. He praises us for our song and good shots." The song ends with the military slogan: "One, two, three, four."

The lyric of "Bathing the Country in Sunshine" reads as follows: "The country is bathed in sunshine. Children are happy. Let's sing a song. What should we sing? 'Without the Communist Party, There Would Be No New China.'"

The last song is "My Good Mum." It is to the effect that my good mum has worked for a day. That would be exhausting. Please sit down and have a cup of tea.

To my surprise old songs have such a big share of the songs preschool students sing. Gu Xianting from the central school told that me the Education Bureau has made it clear that preschool students "are not allowed to sing popular songs; they should only sing songs about heroes, socialism, and the motherland." However, I haven't expected the children here are able to sing my childhood songs. During my talk with Miss Nie Haiyan from Fengning Hope Elementary School, she divided the songs sung in her school into three types: revolutionary, camp, and popular songs. She told me that popular songs were forbidden in her school, and only camp and revolutionary songs were allowed. "Campus songs" may be very inclusive, so they can include songs that are neither revolutionary (songs that are obviously political) nor popular but are fit for the ages of the students, which leaves much space for the Music course at elementary school. Things are different now. When I was a child at school, I could only sing revolutionary songs. Back then we sang revolutionary songs, if we sang songs; we didn't know there were other songs. However, the preschool class of Fengning Hope Elementary School is still focusing on old revolutionary songs. It seems that the school is placing stricter political requirements on younger children. A closer look at these three songs reveals that their theme is to express people's gratitude to or please others. They thank the Party for founding the People's Republic, thank mum for working hard, and are grateful to Chairman Mao. When these children first come into contact with culture, they are regarded minor and subordinate from the cultural perspective without their knowledge and do their best to sing those songs. Banning popular songs in schools is thought-provoking. These songs are an expression of

the trends in real life in society (mainly in cities, the leaders and representatives of the trends in the country). Rejecting popular songs implies an inclination against current trends and an intention to pit ideas against real life. This is also shows that schools adhere to orthodox culture and are conservative culturally.

When the teacher of the preschool class said that class began, the students all rose to salute the teacher loudly the way their elementary school counterparts did. Miss Zhao Xin said, "Let's start with a piece of music. After you listen to it, I'll ask some questions. So please listen carefully. What about your little hands?" Students: "Put them behind my back." They answered in a firm and proud voice as if they felt that it was the most glorious to put their hands behind their back. I hadn't expected that there was even a direction given in this way for the children to keep their hands behind their back. When the class was half done, I realized that the teacher gave a direction to stop the students from whispering to each other: "What about your little mouths?" "Shut them up." What kind of students and class atmosphere are the directions—"What about your little mouths?" "Shut them up." "What about your little mouths?" "Shut them up."—meant to create? However, these rules the children said loudly they would obey didn't outdo their nature of liveliness. They became what they were only minutes after they put their hands behind their back, and they began to whisper after they remained silent only for a while. And the teacher didn't do anything about it.

The music Miss Zhao Xin played for the children was the song "A Little Frog." After the music finished, she asked, "Who is this music about?" This led to the topic on little frogs. Teacher: "Have you seen little frogs?" These were what the children were quite familiar with. They all answered, "Yes." Then the teacher asked what a little frog looked like. The children each gave a description of a part of the frog such as "big eyes, "green clothes," "a white belly" and then a boy student added, "It has a very big mouth." Teacher: "How many legs does it have?" Children: "Four." "What sound does a frog make?" Then the children reshaped their voice to "croak—croak—croak" as a frog does. This encouraged the children to do what they liked and put them in high spirits. The teacher had two students come to the platform to imitate a frog jumping and croaking. They emerged on all fours on the platform, jumping and croaking. They kept jumping until the teacher stopped them and they returned to their seats, hoping they could do more.

These games that made the children excited and learn continued. Teacher: "Is a little frog this big when it was first born?" She led her students in recounting the process of frogs growing from eggs to tadpoles and frogs. The children disagreed with each other regarding whether the eggs were black or white. They finally decided they were black. The teacher told her students that a mother frog laid her eggs in spring, so little frogs were born in spring in water. The children said tadpoles "have big heads and long tails." One of the children was asked to draw a picture of a tadpole. After the picture was completed, the other children all said it wasn't a good picture. Then the teacher illustrated on the blackboard the process of a frog growing from an egg to a tadpole and then to a frog.

So far the class was about nature; the teacher led the children in carefully rediscovering things they were familiar with and tried to make them better able

to describe something. The second half of the class was all about fine arts; the teacher taught her students how to draw pictures of a frog: it has an oval body and round eyes. It was most difficult to draw frog legs. When the children turned over their drawings to the teacher, it turned out that most of them didn't do well with frog legs. "What is it you drew, eh?" the teacher got serious. The teacher asked the students to evaluate their pictures themselves, and the children were honest with their works. When the class was drawing close to an end, the teacher asked, "What did you learn today? Li Haipeng." The boy student Li Haipeng stood up and answered, "I learned how to draw a toad. "A toad?" the teacher asked sternly. "A frog," Li Haipeng corrected himself quickly.

The children believed that frogs were toads and they always called frogs toads. But now their teacher insisted that they called them "little frogs." Adding "little" to "frogs" was meant to make toads more lovely. The teacher would love children who call toads "little frogs" for their obedience. While the children were told to say little frogs instead of toads, they learned two things. One was the literary language that I discussed earlier. This language has its own description of the entire world and offers a world different from the one the children has seen through their own colloquial language. The other was how to be tender. In the world of the children, toads are very common. They often catch them and make a string of them. But they are now "little frogs," a pet name which the children have to use with passion, so they can hardly treat "little frogs" the way they did toads before. This serves the same purpose as the Bigger Sister Little Fish, Uncle Bull, and Aunt Swallow in a first-grade Chinese textbook. Little fish can be caught for food, but now they are big sisters. This literary language helps the children come to know some truths of the world, but it also covers some other truths. Making the children more tender helps them become less ruthless, but it also varnishes their ruthlessness. It is really hard to tell if it is right to teach the children this way. That the teacher was sensitive to the revival of colloquial language (dialects) in class and put a firm stop to it shows that the education really cannot tolerate colloquial language undermining and destroying literary language. Of course, the students had to return to literary language, but the colloquial language they have deep in their hearts have reasserted. In their hearts, little frogs are actually toads, though only little frogs can be used in class. Probably after they have received education long enough, they would think that thing with round eyes, an oval body, and four legs is both a toad and a frog. They must understand two languages, which are actually two attitudes toward life, if they want to cope with this world well. This is because these two languages and the two attitudes toward life are really there: only by means of literary language can the students incorporate into the country's system and mainstream and keep up with the times and trends, and only by means of colloquial language can they grasp and live by the unchangeable truths of the world and life and acquire genuine strength and wisdom in a down-to-earth manner. One who knows no more than colloquial language would find it hard to have a place in modern mainstream life, and one who knows no more than literary language would be deprived of one's real ability to survive and find oneself in a conceptual world which is similarly false and partially false. The "little frog" class of

the preschool class shows that the same problems exist in colleges. The beginning of education suggests what education means in nature.

There was an episode when the preschool class was in class. When Miss Zhao Xin was talking about how eggs turned into tadpoles, a rural woman in her 30s shouted at the classroom door that she wanted to see someone in it. Miss Zhao had to stop to receive her. The woman explained for a quite a while in a loud voice as if she was quarreling before she was understood to be there to pay her child's quarantine fee. The children close to me were attracted by the noises being made. It wasn't long before they realized what was happening. Several children whispered indifferently, "She is here to pay quarantine fee." "It is about quarantine fee." "So and so hasn't paid it either." Although these young children sang 'Bathing the Country in Sunshine" and were taught about "little frogs," they were even clear about real life matters such as "quarantine fee" and "toads."

When I sat in on a third-grade music class, the music teacher Nie Haiyan was about to teach the song "Little Swallow." She didn't start by directly dealing with the song; she started by reviewing what she taught in the previous class—vocalization and rhythm. "The eyes of some of you have started to glaze." "Some others can't do it anymore, and are staring at me for help." Miss Nie kept spurring the students on. Vocal exercises and music theory were boring, and music class didn't make the students happy. It wasn't until the song "Little Swallow" was played that the students' spirit was lifted up. After listening to the music, Miss Nie began to teach the students relevant knowledge as it was often done in other classes. "What color is a little swallow?" "Is it a beneficial or pernicious bird?" "Why does it come back every spring?" The teacher and her students worked together in describing the habits and characteristics of a little swallow: the upper part of its head is black, it has a scissors-type tail, it is a beneficial bird good for agricultural products, and it comes back every spring because it is cold in the North in winter. Having discussed biological knowledge, the teacher began to discuss art. First she drew a swallow on the blackboard: a lovely swallow with a big head and body. She taught musical notations one by one, followed by the song. That took her the bulk of the time to finish. Finally, she went back to music theory: the speeds of singing. There were three common speeds: fast, slow, and medium. The teacher demonstrated the three speeds taking "The East Is Red" for example. "Speed reflects your personal references. The slow speed makes you feel as if you are pulling something very heavy. The fast speed gives the sense you are in a hurry and you won't change." All this is what Miss said to explain speeds to her students. I wondered why she chose "The East Is Red" to demonstrate speeds because I realized that the students weren't familiar with the song and that even she didn't know much about the song. She said to her students: "'The East Is Red' is the oldest song of China." "The East Is Red" taught in the music class made me conclude that things have changed, but the music and Chinese classes have remained the same—singing the same song and teaching the same old stories, though they can hardly produce the same old feelings and have the same old significance. The courses that have the unique features of a past era, in particular, are still being taught with painstaking efforts today, but they are probably more of a way of expressing people's stance and wishes than anything else.

However, the old song "Little Swallow" is still being sung by teachers and students with great emotions. "The little swallow is beautifully dressed. It comes back here every spring. I ask it why that is. It tells me that it is most beautiful here in spring. Little swallow, I should tell you that it is more beautiful here this year. We have erected big factories and installed new machines. You are welcome to stay here forever." The students sang this song vigorously and with great emotions. It is clear they still like this song that has been passed on from generation to generation. The song was created in the period of mobilization for industrialization and expresses appreciation and praise of machines, factories, and urbanization. The appreciation of industrialization overflows so that the little swallow, which is irrelevant to factories and machines, is taken as an apprehensive person. For a little swallow, a beautiful spring is the one with green grass and trees, but the workers obsessed with industrialization insist on recommending big factories and new machines to it. The yearning for industrialization and urbanization still greatly appeals to the elementary school students in backward villages; the students still strongly respond to industrial and urbanization.

In fact, the current elementary school courses are designed to help students develop an interest in industry, cities, and modern life; and this is of particular importance for rural elementary schools and their students. Cities are believed to the symbol of industry, modernization, and modern happy life. This was probably designed intentionally by the editors of the textbooks and courses, and that is accepted as a clear intention in rural elementary schools. The song "Little Swallow" is just one example, and another song called "Let Us Pull the Twin Oars," which was popular at Fengning Hope Elementary School, serves the same purpose. The song is about the White Pagoda in Beijing's Beihai Park casting its shadow in Beihai Lake, the city boasting its greenery and red walls and its people going boating. These unique scenes of Beijing constitute a perfect picture of happy city life for rural children. The composer of the song and the editor who incorporated in the song into the textbook mean to praise new China. However, life isn't so happy in rural areas, which are also part of the new society, so rural children believe that the song is actually eulogizing cities. It is true that readers may misread the intention of editors. Take for example the pictures of Beijing in the "Learn Reading by Way of Picture" section in the third volume of the Chinese textbook for five-year elementary schools, and the text and pictures in Lesson 18. Through these the editor means to help the students grow politically aware of the importance of loving the capital of China. However, the text and pictures illustrating high-rise buildings, flyovers, avenues, parks, sites of historical interest, and airports are well enough to be strong temptation for rural students to leading urban life. The matters and images unintentionally included in the Chinese language and class textbooks such as zoos, buses, and telephone booths, can be vague and tempting signs of urban life. Although Chinese textbooks include texts on natural landscapes such as the tourist destinations including Guilin, the Great Wall, pastures in the Tianshan Mountains, and forests in the Greater Hinggan Mountains, rural students believe they are often connected with cities because tourism is confined to urban people. Moreover, it goes without saying that the

great people highly praised through school education such as scientists and engineers all have urban backgrounds. Through my talks with and research among the students of Fengning Hope Elementary School, I came to strongly feel that they yearn for urban life and they strongly respond to the texts' intentional or unintentional showing off of cities. The text "A Small Coastal City" in the third-grade Chinese textbook is about life in the city in the morning and evening. This text is very popular among the students from different grades who have read it. In my questionnaire handed out to the students of Fengning Hope Elementary School, I also had the question "What is your favorite song?" The third-grade 34 students who had learned the song "Little Swallow" gave 18 of their favorite songs, and the top three were: the first place went to "Little Swallow" which won six votes, or 17.6 %; the second place went to "Our Beautiful Motherland" and "Small White Boat" which each won four votes or 11.8 %; and the third place went to "Anthem of the People's Republic of China" which won three votes, or 8.8 %. Both of the two fifth-grade classes had learned "Let Us Pull the Twin Oars." The 39 students from fifth-grade Class 1 gave 12 of their favorite songs, and the top three were: the first place went to "Let Us Pull the Twin Oars" which won 16 votes, or 33.3 %; the second place went to "The Chinese People" which won ten votes or 20.9 %; and the third place went to "Visit Your Parents Often" which won three votes or 6.2 %. The favorite songs of the three classes show that the first place went to "Little Swallow" and "Let Us Pull the Twin Oars" which are about urban industry, followed by "The Chinese People," "Our Beautiful Motherland," and "Anthem of the People's Republic of China" which are about the development of China; "Song of the Chinese Young Pioneers" which is about the revolution; and "Visit Your Parents Often" which is about the love of one's family. Students love songs about urban development partly because they have been influenced by the school courses (including their music textbooks) and partly because in reality urban and rural areas are separated and there are disparities between them. In fact, the content of the courses and practical life experiences are only part of the reasons. The current education system itself is implicitly oriented toward cities, but I will leave this question until next section.

Both of the courses Ms. Bao Shuxia teaches make her students feel relaxed the most. In reality the sports class is actually designed to let the students move about outdoors. English is difficult, but there are no English exams, and English is not even an optical course for elementary schools either, so it doesn't impose much pressure on the students. The sports class I sat in on was for the third-grade class. The class was first to review the military drill taught in the previous class. The drill had 16 movements altogether. The students did well in their drill. Just like boy students, the girl students received the training of combat and believed that was new and fun. Probably because of my presence, the students tried to do their best in the drill. The second part of the class was the game called "diverting water through a mountain." In the game separate lines of boys and girls stood face to face and stretched their hands to form a tunnel. The students at the heads of the lines moved through the tunnel to join the lines at the tails to keep the tunnel there. The process went on and on with the students keeping joining the tails of the lines.

The boys didn't do well, and Ms. Bao punished them by having each of them do three push-ups while the girls enjoyed with a malicious air the show the boys were making. The military drill and game were both done under the scorching sun in the unsheltered play area. The students were unaware of being exposed to the sun and were happy during the drill and game. When the class was half way through, the teacher was moved with compassion and had the students move to the narrow shade provided by the wall. The boy students sat together in a circle to do a strange game: a student walks outside the circle and pats the head of someone in the circle on his unprepared while asking, "Is the melon mature?" The one being patted springs forward to catch the one who patted his head, has him give a performance and join the circle, and takes over the right to pat the head of someone. The girls did another game called hopscotch on one leg only at another place. Most of the students of this class were obedient. The boys even finished their punishment by counting the push-ups they did. However, either in the drill or in the game, some students stayed out of them, running, shouting, and playing on their own. The teacher just let them do as they pleased. Bao Shuxia said that the school required rules to be observed in sports class, but she was opposed to that and gave the students freedom. She believed that the children should be set free at least in sports class. It is true that she makes sure that in her sports class gives her students a sense of self-discipline and freedom.

The English class I sat in on that Bao Shuxia taught was also for the third grade. She started with color. She had pens of different colors in her hand and had her students tell in English what color each of them was. That was followed by nouns and simple sentences. Her pronunciation was good. The students studied hard. They were interested and loved foreign things. Fengning Hope Elementary School is funded by the Japanese and its investor is UNESCO. This makes them think highly of foreign things. However, the US bombing of China's embassy in Yugoslavia irritated these students. Their essays show that they are eager to invent new weapons and turn into bombs with which to attack or bombard the United States. Except for the United States, they have a good opinion of other countries. Representatives of the sponsor of this school travel from Japan to the school to mark its anniversary every year, and they demand the respect of the students. Thanks to Project Hope, this year the EU embassy in Beijing organized a number of European diplomats studying Chinese at Beijing Language and Culture University on an inspection tour of the school. In classes the visitors gave lectures on geography, English, and music. The students also brought them home for rural meals. Wang Chunlei, the third-grade class leader, answered many of my questions in bureaucratic tone and with banal remarks, but when it came to questions about what impression EU guests left on him, he gave very individualistic answers like "I want to make friends with them" and "they are better-tempered than the Chinese." By "temper" Wang Chunlei probably meant disposition. It was the dispositions of Western guests and the culture reflected by their dispositions that deeply moved the Chinese child.

Anyway, the range of vision of the children from remote villages is no longer narrow and their thoughts aren't sealed off anymore. They have traveled to few

places. Take the fifth grade, the highest, for example. An overwhelming majority of the students of that grade haven't been to a town larger than their county town. A small number of them haven't even been to their county town. For them, the small towns such as Zhailing and Fengshan are already cities (some of the students included them in their answer to the question "Which city have you been to?"). However, through their textbooks, TV, and the foreign guests they met, they no longer believe that the rest of the world and other countries are strange and mysterious and they don't derive misunderstanding and hatred from them as people of my age would do when they went to elementary school. They love their country, and hated for a while the United States that bombed the Chinese embassy (which is evident in their essays). However, their attitude shows that they think highly of foreign countries and feel integrated with other countries. Volume six of the Society textbook designed for the second semester of the fifth grade is about world geography and history. In my questionnaire for the 87 students of the two fifth-grade classes, I included the question "What is your favorite text in this volume of the Society textbook?" The results are shown in the following Table 4.1.

This survey shows that what worldviews students of the highest grade in Fengning Hope Elementary School have about history and geography. The texts of the Society textbook are all written in unbiased language about facts, and have basically the same style and way of writing, so if a student likes a text better, it is mostly likely that he or she loves what, including the country, the text is about better. The table above indicates that the students are more interested in geography than history, which in fact means they are more interested in the world of today than the world of yesterday. With regard to the students' attitude toward countries

Table 4.1 The results of favorite text in this volume of the Society textbook

There is Only One Earth	44	50.6 %
World War I	6	6.9 %
Environmental Protection	6	6.9 %
Japan	5	5.7 %
Southeast Asia	4	4.6 %
Founders of Communism	4	4.6 %
Our World	3	3.4 %
The United States	2	2.3 %
The Industrial Revolution	2	2.3 %
World War II	2	2.3 %
World Environment Day	2	2.3 %
The Search for Science	1	1.1 %
Italy	1	1.1 %
Scientific and Technological Advancement	1	1.1 %
The Earth: the Home We Share	1	1.1 %
Latin America	1	1.1 %
Earth Day	1	1.1 %
Ancient Civilizations	1	1.1 %

and regions, they are more concerned about neighboring countries (Japan and Southeast Asian countries) than countries that are farther away. Regarding remote countries, the United States had two votes probably because it is powerful and is well connected with China whereas Italy and Latin America each had one vote for reasons nobody knows, though it was probably Italy has many sites of cultural interest. The students didn't show any interest in Oceania which is not well connected with China and Africa which is poor. With regard to history, the number of students who are concerned about World War I is three times the figure for those interested in World War II. Is it because greater victory was achieved in World War I? The survey shows that the students like the text "There is Only One Earth" the best; more than half of them made it their favorite text. To some extent, this demonstrates that the students are aware that all around the globe is integrated.

The last class that I should share with my readers is the political education class taught by Wang Yanhua, the second-grade head teacher. She discussed Lesson 11 titled "Don't be Cheated." Before she touched upon the lesson, she told (actually she read) a fairy story about a squirrel, a white rabbit, a hedgehog, and a fox as an anecdote which was like a narrative approach used in ancient Chinese novels. According to Wang Yanhua's story, one day a hedgehog was playing with his friends the white rabbit and squirrel in the forest. They unknowingly came to the door of the fox's house. They had never seen the fox and didn't know him. When the fox saw them, he was very happy and began to slobber over them so much. He rolled his black eyes and came up with an idea. He pointed at the three colorful balls under the willow in front of his door and said, "Welcome, welcome. Will you each take a ball? That will be interesting." Just as the white rabbit and the squirrel were about take a ball, the hedgehog tried to stop them. The hedgehog told his friend: "My teacher has told me not to take anything of a stranger." But the white rabbit and the squirrel didn't listen to him. When they arrived under the willow, they were caught and caged by the fox. The hedgehog took advantage of that and fled. He rushed to report this to the mothers of the squirrel and the white rabbit. They all took action together and drove the fox away, so the poor white rabbit and squirrel were rescued. After the teacher told the story, she hanged out a small blackboard with questions written on it: (1) Who was cheated in the story? (2) Why was the hedgehog not cheated? (3) Who was the bad fellow in the story? As for the first question, a muddle-headed boy student said the hedgehog and the squirrel were cheated. The teacher asked a girl and she gave the correct answer. The answers the students gave for the second question were that "because the hedgehog didn't take the things of others offhandedly" and that "he followed the advice of his teacher and was on guard at the presence of strangers." The teacher summarized their answers, "He remembered what his teacher said and didn't take the things of strangers offhandedly." The answer to the third question was simple; of course it was the fox. The teacher said, "In our society, there are bad fellows like the fox. What will you do when you come across one? You will have the answer in the lesson we are going to study today. It is Lesson 11: 'Don't be Cheated.'"

At first the teacher led her students in reviewing the illustrations in the text and recognized a little boy named Tiedan as the hero in the text and the "stranger" standing in front of him. The teacher told her students that a stranger "is someone you have never met before and you don't know." A student was asked by the teacher to read the text: "One evening, Tiedan was playing close to his home. A stranger came up and said to him, 'Hi, kid. There will be a circus show at Wang Village this evening. Will you come? I can take you there.' When Tiedan realized it was a stranger, he said, 'No, I won't go.'" The teacher cut in, "Tiedan is a kid anyway, so he thinks the way other kids do. Does he like the circus show?" The students: "Yes." Teacher: "Sure, but did he go there?" The students: "No." Teacher: "Why didn't he go?" A student: "Because his parents and teachers often remind him of the need to be alert at the presence of strangers and take care not be fooled by evil people." Then the text continued: "The stranger took out of his pocket a handful of chocolates and stuffed them into Tiedan's hand, saying, 'Come with me and you can have the caddies.' Then Tiedan thought of his parents and teachers reminding him of the need to be alert at the presence of strangers and try not be fooled by evil people. So he shouted, 'I don't want your candies, and I won't go with you.'" Then the teacher asked the students, "Why did Tiedan shout?" A student: "He wanted to alert others so that they may come to his rescue." Teacher: "Is all this happening far from Tiedan's home?" A student: "No." Teacher: "Because Tiedan already knew that the stranger was a good guy?" The students: "No." The remaining story was that as Tiedan was shouting, the stranger laid a palm over his mouth and Tiedan struggled and shouted. Villagers rushed to help and caught the stranger. They found him to be a child trafficker. The villagers praised Tiedan for his alertness and managing not be fooled by an evil person. The text had three illustrations: the first is of the stranger inviting Tiedan to a show; the second is of the stranger offering Tiedan candies; and the third is of the stranger laying a palm over Tiedan's mouth and grabbing him on his arm, of Tiedan struggling and shouting, and of villagers rushing to the scene with clubs in their hands. Teacher: "The illustration shows that Tiedan is shouting. What is he shouting?" A student: "Come." Teacher: "At this time Tiedan stands unafraid against the stranger, so he is very …?" The students couldn't come up with the answer for a while before a student said, "Brave." Teacher: "Yes, very brave. Now will you think it over or discuss what sort of child Tiedan is?" The students gave all kinds of answers: "A brave child," "an honest, brave child," "a kindhearted child," and "a strong-willed child." The teacher retained the word "brave" and added "resourceful" because he shouted when he was in danger. Teacher: "Why will you do if this happens to you, and what have you learnt from this?" The students also gave all kinds of answers to the first question. Here are some of them: "I won't listen to strangers and take anything from them. I will be alert at the presence of strangers and take care not to be fooled by them"; "I will use my mind if that happens to me and try not be fooled"; and "Children should not take anything from strangers and join them." The students' answers to the question "what have you learnt from this?" are: "We came to understand that there are still evil people in society. We need to be alert as Tiedan was, sharpen our vigilance and refuse to be fooled or cheated by evil

people." All this is what the text says, and the teacher led her students in reading it. Then she asked, "Can you remember it?" Finally, the teacher asked the students to look at the exercise at the end of the text: "Why should you be alert?" The teacher's answer was: "I don't want to be cheated or fooled by others for the purpose of protecting myself." When the teacher corrected the answers by her students, she stressed the need "to protect themselves." At last the teacher assigned a homework assignment: "Xiao qing is home alone when a stranger knocks at the door asking for permission to enter the house to fix pipes. What will you do if this happens to you?"

This assignment was actually based on urban life because rural neighbors keep close contact with each other. Strangers knocking at the door in rural areas isn't so dangerous as in cities where units of residence are isolated from each other. Moreover, farmers of Fengning County get water from their own wells in their courtyards, so they don't have pipes at home at all. This assignment for rural students is an example of the embarrassment for the current Chinese education system caused by the fact that urban and rural students share the same textbooks that are based on urban life. However, this problem isn't my concern. What interested me is that the text "Don't be Cheated" demonstrates the differences and their significance between the present and past political courses in terms of the concept of people, the relations between them as well as the definition of ideal personality. Everyone knows that there was an important text called "Liu Wenxue" in the textbooks in the 1970s. The text was about "the relations between a kid and an evil person" and was designed to ensure that the students would be alert and brave, so it falls into the same category as today's text "Don't be Cheated." However, vast differences exist between "Don't be Cheated" and "Liu Wenxue" in terms of the creation of scenes, the conception of characters, and the educational goals. These differences shows that while the current curriculum system retains many traditional contents, it is trying to make some adjustments and changes to suit new social conditions. From these changes, we can see changes in the contemporary atmosphere and spirit as well as the current education system's awareness of and tolerance to these changes.

The text "Liu Wenxue" in the elementary school textbook in the 1970s was about what Liu Wenxue, "a good child of Chairman Mao," did. He was very watchful as a revolutionary and kept firm in mind the need to carry out class struggle. One day on his way home from school, he saw a former landlord slip into the vegetable farm of the production team and realized the class enemy was doing sabotage actions. He followed him to find him stealing the chili of the production team. Liu snapped and tried to stop him. The former landlord resorted to carrots in an attempt to bribe Liu first, but he was turned down. Liu Wenxue shouted at him. Having failed to bribe Liu, the former landlord turned ferocious and killed him. Liu died in order to "protect collective property." Both "Liu Wenxue" and "Don't be Cheated" followed the same model of "kids and evil people." Both heroes encountered evil people alone, were bribed, turned down bribes, shouted, and struggled, but the two essays are different from each other in many areas. First, the "evil persons" were different. The features of the evil person in "Don't be

Cheated" was blurred. He was defined as a "swindler" and what he did was to traffic in children for profit. His motivation was simple and he did that for economic reasons. He and his prey Tiedan were hostile to and struggled against each other, though they didn't hate each other: a swindler who trafficked in children would not arouse hatred. The evil person in "Liu Wenxue," however, was a "former landlord" who was politically unique; he was a "class enemy," so the hatred he and Liu Wenxue had for each other was natural and inevitable. This hatred not only came from Liu's attempt to stop the former landlord stealing collective property and the ensued resistance, struggle, and murder, but also from the more profound background of the confrontation of the two classes. The former landlord's theft of the chili of the production team was an "economic crime," but he was infringing up the "collective property" and he was a "class enemy" himself, so his theft was regarded as political sabotage. Consequently, the hatred he and Liu Wenxue had for each other simply wouldn't go away and their struggle against each other couldn't be reconciled: it was a life-and-death situation, so he eventually killed Liu. From "Liu Wenxue" to "Don't be Cheated," the evil person has shifted from a former landlord to a child trafficker; the political matter has changed to an economic one; and the life-and-death struggle due to inborn hatred has become an accidental conflict: these changes indicate that the relations between people in Chinese society today have become less tense.

Nevertheless, the text "Don't be Cheated" makes the child trafficker a "stranger," this leads people to distrust, suspect, and even become vigilant against every stranger. In addition, the lessons to be learned from the text is generalized as "Children should not take anything from strangers and join them." Moreover, the homework assignment calls on children to guard against even strangers asking permission to fix pipes at their homes. This is different from "Liu Wenxue" which focuses hatred on the class enemy. "Liu Wenxue" targets hatred only at the "class enemy," whereas "Don't be Cheated" calls on people to be vigilant against all strangers regardless of their "class backgrounds." This shows from another perspective that although the relations between people have become less tense in China today when people are economic interest-oriented and there are widespread conflicts of interests, the relations are intense in more areas: "Don't be Cheated" is actually designed to help students survive in these new circumstances.

It is this intension that reveals the biggest difference between "Liu Wenxue" and "Don't be Cheated": the difference between the "kids" in the "kids and evil persons" formula is actually the difference between "heroes." The significant difference between the "heroes" in these two texts is that one is a child who struggles on his own initiative to protect others while the other is a child who is forced to react in protection of himself. The former landlord doesn't want to make it difficult for Liu Wenxue. The latter, however, begins to investigate the former when he is seen slipping into the production team's vegetable farm and strikes at him when he finds the former stealing chili. At first, the former landlord doesn't want to do harm to Liu Wenxue's person and property. He is stealing the chili of the production team and Liu Wenxue dies for the protection of the sacred "others" (collective property in this case). In the text "Don't be Cheated," Tiedan is also considered

to be a "brave" hero, but the meanings of this "brave" and "hero" are obviously different from the "brave" and "hero" to which Liu Wenxue is referred. From the beginning, Tiedan simply wants to escape from the evil person's trap and attack by the evil person, and he doesn't want to catch him when he finds him an evil person. The text repeatedly praises Tiedan for his awareness of the need and his ability to protect himself and doesn't link him with the sacred thing. The changes from Liu Wenxue and Tiedan demonstrate that the ideals and objectives of China's education system has shifted from promoting sacred heroes to life-like individuals and that Chinese society is in a transition from emphasis on conviction to emphasis on human needs.

It may be worth pointing out that in the current elementary school courses, all young heroes and heroines who were included in textbooks as Liu Wenxue was have been retained. These include Liu Hulan, Wang Erxiao, Yulai, and Wang Pu. Liu Wenxue, however, was replaced by Tiedan, a role model for self-protection. The reasons for this could be that Liu Hulan, Wang Erxiao, Yulai, and Wang Pu were historical images whereas Liu Wenxue was an image in real life. While retaining young heroes representing historical images, the education system has replaced Liu Wenxue with Tiedan in order to create an image in real life. This shows that the education system is conservative while making slow progress in carrying out delicate adjustments and reforms. Wang Yanhua and her students didn't have any knowledge of the adjustments and reforms. They discussed the text "Don't be Cheated" as it was and weren't curious about the changes. This shows that they have all grown up in a culture that has changed.

Chapter 5
The Education Cycle

I really feel that the school in Humaying Township is not only organizationally separate from the township's villages but in terms of educational content divorced from rural life. It is a self-contained system largely sealed off from its surroundings, and the farmers who live their lives outside its walls do not understand its purpose. The farmers send their children to the school because doing so is a kind of custom that goes without saying. They did not need to do so in the past, but last year the system of universal nine-year compulsory education had been stepped up in Fengning County. Now farmers are also compelled by the government to send their children to school, which makes it unacceptable not to even if they live in poverty and their children are first generation students. On the other hand, the farmers send their children to school for another reason that is more obscure; they want their children to go to college so they can leave the countryside and become more than just famers. They know few make it to university, but who does not want their children to fall upon such luck. The parents of elementary school students nowadays all have a few years or so of education, but much of what they had learned has been lost after many years of not applying that knowledge to life, so they dare not guide their children's homework. Moreover, the parents just want to rest at home after backbreaking work in the fields, and so are in no mood to question their children about their homework. Instead they just assure them of their work, encourage them to study hard in school (teachers will also spur on the students in school) and advise them to listen to their teachers at school and not to get into any fights. Now, however this limited authority of the parents in the countryside is increasingly in wane. The party secretary of Humaying Village, Sun Yazhong, summed it up by saying that in his childhood parental authority in the village was strong and children obeyed their parents, but now 90 % of parents cannot control their children. Sun Yazhong believes the reason to be that the young of today are too pampered because there are fewer children. He said that parent-child relationships are especially important when the child is young, and

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thinks that parents do not value their children if they grow up thinking that life is all fun and games. How the authority of parents has disappeared is not important to us. We are focused on the weakening ability of parents, villages and even entire rural communities to be a part of school life, and especially a part of the teaching and learning processes. A few years ago in Humaying Village, before Hope elementary school was established and the village school was at the old address, the village authorities suggested the township central school transfer a teacher of the village school to somewhere else. This was not because the teacher wasn't fit for teaching, rather, it was because the teachers in the small village were divided into two wrangling groups, and because of the disgruntled factions the teacher in question always asked for leave or just not show up for class. In recent years, the village authorities have not interfered in the school's internal affairs, even though their involvement a few years back did not interfere with classroom teaching. In the Cultural Revolution, poor and lower-middle poor peasant representatives once managed the school system, and up to today the memory of these old teachers are still fresh here. Gu Xianting, leader who in charge of preschool education at the township central school and the school's general accountant, was the temporary head of a school in Houying Township in the early 1970s. He said back then that important school matters had to be discussed with poor peasant representatives. "If he did not agree, the matter had to be cast aside," "He was not a top-level official, but what he said counted." This system was soon abolished after the end of the Cultural Revolution.

Outside the walls of the school, village life proceeds at its own pace and logic. Humaying Township overlooks the Chao River, and the more populated and affluent area below the dam in Fengning County is good ground. The area has a lot of mountains, but it also has floodplains. Rice has become the main livelihood here because the rivers make it convenient to grow rice in the floodplains. If it was not for the mountains, when the paddy rice seedlings are green, the scenery of this northern mountainous area would look just like the areas south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River. Though there are floodplains, they are few. Each person of Humaying Village only has one *mu* of flat land divided into six or seven pieces. Farmers still use traditional manual methods to cultivate the land here and arable land is worked by plowing with horses and cattle. There are few tractors. According to Gu Xianting, "One household among ten has a tractor." Land is scarce, farming methods are old, and the farmers have very little education; nonetheless they are experts in their work. With regard to the technical aspects of farming, the farmers' children who went to elementary school and then graduated from secondary school and returned home were nowhere close to their parents in handiness, and what they learned was of little use on the six or seven pieces of one *mu* land. Village farmers began to experience demand for seeds and planting methods, but the schools and the graduates they produced did not comprehend new agricultural science and technological methods in farming, and so the farmers had to rely on their own experience and specialized agricultural experts to get effective results. Sun Yazhong said he does not look to the schools to resolve any problems encountered in agricultural science and thinks "the schools are clueless anyway."

Indeed, the existing national education curriculum was not designed for modern rural life. The infiltration of extensive ideological and political education in a variety of courses is aimed at life within the state system, and the wide range of natural science education and language courses are geared for life within cities and the industrial system. For rural life, the existing school curriculum does generate some knowledge: when preparing for national, urban and industrial course objectives, students naturally want to learn how to read and do accounting work, but all that is needed for rural life is to know a few words and to be able to settle a few accounts. Yes, schools can improve the cultural life and consumption capacity of farmers' children; such as being able to understand some of what they watch on TV, but this does nothing to help improve the lives of rural society. The only course in the existing school curriculum that is targeted the rural community is labor skills for rural communities, and among the 40 lessons in the weekly curriculum at Fengning Elementary School, there is only one morning activity (namely morning reading) for this course, and it is said that this course isn't taught strictly.

With weak demand for new agricultural science and technology by farmers, and state and government initiatives to promote agricultural science and technology, it was impossible to get any response or help from the formal national education system, and so it was back to square one. In Humaying Township there is a building called the "Agricultural Science and Education Center" that was jointly constructed by the township government and the township school in accordance with the arrangement of higher ups. This center was only completed because of county funds and government fundraising, and it was designed to function as an institution to promote agricultural science and technology in the township. But in reality most of the building space is allocated for another institution. The township school in Humaying is located in this building and originally the school had no fixed abode. It was once located in a side room of Tahuangqi Experimental Elementary School, and later moved back to Humaying Township High School in Tahuangqi. When the high school expanded its operations in the township, it was once again squeezed out. It did not find a final resting place until the Agricultural Science and Education Center was completed. Because this building is the same compound as the township government which funded the construction of the compound. So the building is home to the sections and departments of the township government which don't have a place in the township government building. In the Agricultural Science and Education Center, only the Humaying Township Comprehensive School for Adult Education perform agricultural science and technology functions. The school is located on the second floor and has three rooms. The president of the adult school, Chen Ying, said their main function is to invite experts from the county and Chengde City to come and give lectures on agricultural science and technology, and to provide free lectures for representatives of the township's villages. He also told me that they sometimes show videos on new technologies in villages. However, because of lack of funding, they engage in very few activities in a year and the classroom is often empty. Sometimes the township holds a large meeting and they use the three classrooms of the adult school. When I was in Humaying Township carrying out my investigation, I lived in a dormitory

with Gu Xianting, who is responsible for the township's preschool education. One day the Township Party Committee used the adult school to hold a general meeting for Party members. The vice president of the Party School of the CPC County Committee was invited to make a report, and I heard him regaling about Deng Xiaoping Theory as I was going downstairs.

With regard to agricultural technology, the adult school has been mainly promoting a new method of rice cultivation for the past two years called seedling throwing. Seedling throwing adopts the seedling tray method of raising seedlings but then transplants the raised rice seedlings by throwing them in the paddy fields. Planting in paddy fields by tossing seedlings is a big change compared to the traditional planting method of transplanting rice seedlings. Because the rice seedlings are first cast into shallow water, this type of tilling will not bury them in the soil and a higher number of seedlings are tilled; second, scattered-planting allows for plenty of air and light to get through, creating a nutritious environment that is green from top to bottom in autumn, and produces large, plump grains of rice. This approach in the local agricultural sector is seen as a revolution in rice cultivation. The technique is simple and can be learned quickly. It does not require complicated, specialized training, and it especially does not require a deep understanding of science. The only obstacle to popularizing this method is the mentality of the farmers. In farming today, farmers still hold onto the past idea of carrying forward tradition and thus are generally unwilling to adopt new methods. They want high yields, but do not believe this method will deliver, and instead use fertilizer to speed up cultivation. The president of the Adult School, Chen Ying, spoke of such things with both anger and comicality. He said: "The seeding throwing method has already been proven to be successful after repeated use, but many farmers do not accept it because they dislike the method. The traditional method of transplantation requires one to be particular about forming rows, but there is no row-to-row spacing when seedlings are thrown by hand. They think the method is sloppy and looks messy. Others think pulling weeds is harder if rows are not formed, but in fact pulling and slicing seedlings is not done along rows. The farmers here rarely recognize new things at the outset. It was not until after experts of the Agricultural Bureau of Fengning County assembled in Humaying to provide training by showing videos and giving on-the-spot explanations that more people started accepting seedling throwing. This year about 50 % of the farmers will have adopted seedling throwing."

From the county's Agricultural Bureau to the township's adult school, innovations in agricultural technology have been made and its own path has been promoted, but the progress is in no way related to the current national education system. The national education system, from elementary school to secondary school, has its own goal; that is, to move students up a grade. It is not until specialized secondary school and university that the social goal of education begins to show; that is, to train talented people to thrive in the national system and the urban life and industrial systems, which is the primary purpose of professional schooling. But the needs of rural communities are not considered within the educational system. Furthermore, it is difficult to produce a real, intense need for education in

present-day rural communities, and the simple production and life cycle in rural social life can be maintained by relying on traditions and practice and skills taught face to face. In this system, the main objective of rural education from elementary school onward is to supply city-based universities with talented persons. From small villages to number one secondary schools in counties, from educational administrative departments to the entire government, as well as parents of students, all base their public assessments of a school's quality and success potential on the number of students entering higher schools.

With regard to the proportion of students entering higher schools, Fengning hopes to reach 100 % by having all elementary school students advance to junior secondary school and from there to secondary school and university, and for two years now it has adopted the system of nine-year compulsory education. The more meaningful proportion of students entering higher schools is that of junior secondary school students entering senior secondary school. I asked two people about this ratio and they told me there is some discrepancy. One, according to Humaying Township School president Yang Shuling, is that out of 3200 graduates from junior secondary schools in the entire county last year, 1100 were promoted to senior secondary school, 1000 advanced to vocational school (does not include students sent to county vocational schools at the senior secondary school level) and 200 entered technical school at the junior secondary school level. He said "nearly 1000 students could not get in anywhere," that is to say they could not advance their studies. According to his figures, the proportion of students entering higher schools is approximately 72 %. But the Party secretary (once the school's president and Party secretary, he has served as full-time Party secretary since April this year) of Fengning County Number One Secondary School, Liu Yuquan, said something different. He said there are 4000 junior secondary school graduates each year, and from that pool of candidates Number One Secondary School accepts more than 600 each year, Fengshan and Zhailing senior secondary schools accept more than 500, and the county's three senior secondary schools accept a total of 1100. With the addition of the students accepted into vocational schools, 1700–1800 students are enrolled. Moreover, an additional 120 enter technical schools at the junior secondary school level. Liu Yuquan calculated the proportion of junior secondary school students entering higher schools at around 48 %. The figures that Yang Shuling gave on the proportion of junior secondary school students entering higher schools is less than what Liu Yuquan stated, and the vocational and junior-level technical school enrollment figures that Liu Yuquan gave are much higher, but at least the senior secondary school enrollment figures are consistent. In the educational structure of Fengning County, its three senior secondary schools are most important. They are educational pagodas and competitive platforms of upward mobility for talented persons in the county. Especially important is the key Number One Secondary School.

Fengning County Number One Secondary School is made up of an expansive school yard and imposing building construction. The teaching building, the student dormitory, the building for family dependents and the laboratory form a horizontal and vertical grouping, and the exercise yard is very big. Party secretary

Liu Yuquan told me this exercise yard was actually cut out of the mountain. Number One Secondary School currently has 34 classes: ranks one and two have ten classes per year and rank three has nine, and there are also 5 tutorial classes. In total there are 2200 students. Class capacity for rank one is 70 and 64 for ranks two and three. A few years ago the number of students remained at around 1100, but for the past two years, because of the newly built student dormitory and laboratory which can be used as classrooms, the carrying capacity of the school increased and this doubled the enrollment size. At enrollment time, slightly more students are accepted based on their test scores so accepted self-pay students must pay 5000–6000 *yuan* more in fees for three years compared to regularly accepted students. The many self-pay students at Number One Secondary School make the school strong economically. For example, the new laboratory covers an area of 6370 square meters and cost 5 million *yuan* to construct. The county did not make investment in such a large project and, although the municipal and provincial education bureaus did provide some of the funding, it was not much. The bulk of the funding came from students, mainly those who paid their own expenses. Liu Yuquan calls this being a fever for attending senior secondary school. He said in recent years senior middle school has become in the vogue, and so more and more people want to attend the school. Now more students can attend. According to state regulations, Number One Secondary School can have 18 classes and 600 students, but those numbers have been far exceeded. In this regard the county's education bureau has relaxed its policy a bit to allow for policy execution. Among the students, girls accounted for nearly 40 %.

At Number One Secondary School there are a total of 172 teachers including administrators and logistics personnel. A year ago 68.3 % of the teachers held bachelor's degrees. This year some junior college students were added as teachers and the proportion of teachers from regular colleges dropped 10 %. Liu Yuquan said some professional training college graduates are being recruited because they have good character and teach better than many regular college graduates. Two years ago three graduates from secondary specialized schools were also recruited, two of whom teach math; the other teaches English. The two math teachers are just as good as the other math teachers, and the English teacher is best among his peers. He was employed by the school immediately and given senior rank after getting first place in the city in the Unified Teaching Examination. Title is of great concern to teachers and it is rarely a problem for the education bureau to bestow this important senior title upon secondary school teachers, but as a vocational high school graduate he could not meet the promotion requirements so the school gave him the senior title based on his many outstanding achievements in secondary education. However this appointment is not for life. One's performance may be outstanding this year, but if someone else in the city comes in first in the Unified Teaching Examination and their graduating class scores well on the *gaokao*, then they will immediately be appointed to senior rank and receive higher salary and more benefits; if your performance is down, then you will be dismissed from your senior post and your salary will drop accordingly. This evident effect is said to stimulate teachers' enthusiasm. Housing is also important to teachers and is part of

a teacher's benefits package at Number One Secondary School, as well as a point of great envy among primary and secondary school teachers in rural areas. Each dormitory occupied by a teacher is 103 square meters and has three rooms and one living room. In the words of Liu Yuquan, which he said not without pride, "It should be mentioned that they are fairly nice." Some of the teachers live in a single-story building, most of which have two rooms, but there are a few with three rooms. Mainly new young teachers live in the single-story buildings. Teachers' salary is not high. The highest salary is for special grade teachers who earn, 800 *yuan* a month each, but other teachers earn less. Liu Yuquan said, "I get 750 *yuan* for life." Yet compared to other public school teachers, a teacher at Number One Secondary School enjoys higher earnings due to the underdeveloped economy. All departments of Number One Secondary School guarantee nearly two hundred *yuan* in subsidy funds to their employees for free, and the school borrows this money to ensure the funds. With regard to the teaching staff, the greatest threat currently facing the school is the outflow of backbone teachers. Places including Tianjin and southern China use the promises of high salary and status to entice good teachers away, and sometimes a proven track record is not even needed. Schools in poor areas that face this challenge simply do not fight back. The unity of the national *gaokao* adds versatility to the knowledge and skills teachers have, but inter-regional competition to enter a high school makes this "poaching" approach increasingly common, and Fengning Number One Secondary School has several teachers who were recruited by other schools. This approach worries Liu Yuquan, but he is also helpless to change it.

The reason teachers at Fengning Number One Secondary School are favored elsewhere is due to the school's good *gaokao* results. In all the counties that belong to Chengde City, Fengning County has ranked first in the higher education entrance examination for 12 consecutive years. This achievement has become the glory of all Fengning people. Even the deputy director of the county Party office proudly mentioned this achievement to me when he introduced the situation, saying that they have "worn the crown for 13 consecutive years." In 1997 the *gaokao* results (number of people raised to a higher plane of education) of Fengning Number One Secondary School even surpassed those of Chengde Number One Secondary School, a key municipal secondary school in the city, which made Fengning the place where the city's best science examinee are at. Liu Yuquan said that each year Number One Secondary School has 70–80 students admitted to key universities and 140–150 students admitted to regular colleges, and that 200 students make it to special vocation schools directly under the provincial government. In addition around 200–300 students enter professional training colleges (Chengde University and Chengde Teachers College) directly under the municipal government each year. "Sometimes these schools accept at least 300 students," Liu Yuquan said. The term used to describe students admitted to professional training colleges directly under the provincial government based on scores is called "crossing the higher plane of education," and going to a higher school is called "moving forward." Students admitted to junior colleges directly under the municipal government are also said to be "moving forward," but not "crossing the higher plane

of education." The students referred to here as "moving forward" are limited to admitted students who were announced in admissions newspapers or by admissions offices, and does not include the non-planned enrollments and lifelong learners of those institutions. For example, each year Nankai University and Tianjin University recruit 40–50 of such students in Fengning, but they are not included in the number of students "moving forward" from Number One Secondary School. Each year 10–20 students from senior secondary schools apply to secondary specialized schools (graduates from junior secondary schools can apply to secondary specialized schools for junior secondary students), and these students are included in the number of students "moving forward."

In the words of Fengning Number One Secondary School, sending their students to higher education entrance examinations is like farmers farming, meaning that some years are major while others are not. The year 1997 was a big year for them, as scores actually soared passed those of Chengde Number One Secondary School. But the year 1998 was a small year for them, shaving off more than 40–50 successful examinees from the previous year. By looking at the original higher education admissions list of Fengning Number One Secondary School for the two years of 1997 and 1998 it can be seen that while vast in terms of territory, the underdeveloped poor areas of the country supply the state, city and industrial systems with talented persons each year.

Fengning Number One Secondary School
Higher Education Admissions List for 1997

1. Guan Xuesong (undergraduate): Control Automation, PLA Institute of Communications Engineering
2. Xu Shiyou (undergraduate): Electronic Engineering Institute at PLA National University of Defense Technology
3. Yang Li (undergraduate): Applied Chemistry, Wuhan University of Defense Technology
4. Zhao Xiaofeng (undergraduate): Clinical Medicine, School of Medicine at Nankai University
5. Wang Xiangrong (undergraduate): Auditing, Department of Accounting at Nankai University
6. Hu Chunlei (undergraduate): Architectural Engineering, College of Civil Engineering at Tongji University
7. Pan Guidong (undergraduate): Investment Economics, School of Economics and Management at Shijiazhuang Railway Institute
8. Zhou Haichun (undergraduate): Civil Engineering, School of Architectural Engineering at Shijiazhuang Railway Institute
9. Tong Xiaoyan (undergraduate): Department of Knitting Engineering and Knitted Garment at China Textile University
10. Ding Feng (undergraduate): Industrial Foreign Trade, Department of International Trade at China Textile University
11. Li Linyan (undergraduate): Double major in Chinese Literature and Trade and Economics, Department of Chinese at Minzu University of China

12. Shi Rui (undergraduate): Software, School of Computer Science and Engineering at Minzu University of China
13. Lu Hehui (undergraduate): Management Engineering, School of Humanities and Economic Management at China University of Geosciences
14. Lin Yanjun (undergraduate): School of Clinical Medicine at China Medical University
15. Fu Weili (undergraduate): Landscape Architecture, School of Landscape Architecture at Beijing Forestry University
16. Song Chunhong (undergraduate): Clinical Medicine, Shandong Medical University
17. Wang Lianfu (undergraduate): Clinical Medicine, Beijing Medical University
18. Zhang Zhandong (undergraduate): Department of Chemical Engineering, School of Chemical Engineering at South China University of Technology
19. Zhao Xueyan (undergraduate): Clinical Medicine, School of Basic Medical Sciences at Shanghai Medical University
20. Wang Xin (undergraduate): Information Engineering, University of Electronic Science and Technology
21. Yao Wei (undergraduate): Mechanical Engineering and Automation, Department of Mechanical Engineering at Tsinghua University
22. Lü Ou (undergraduate): Accounting (concerning foreign affairs), School of Accounting and Finance at Shanghai JiaoTong University
23. Sun Hailong (undergraduate): Computer Science and Technology, Electronic Information Engineering Institute at North China JiaoTong University
24. Liu Lin (undergraduate): Electric Energy Engineering, Department of Power Engineering at North China Electric Power University
25. Wen Ming (undergraduate): College of Vehicle Engineering at Beijing Institute of Technology
26. Cheng Xizhong (undergraduate): Electronics and Information Technology, Wuhan University of Hydraulic and Electrical Engineering
27. Wu Yunfeng (undergraduate): Mechanical Engineering and Automation, College of Electrical Engineering at Hohai University
28. Xu Jianguo (undergraduate): Architecture, School of Civil Engineering and Architecture at Dalian University of Technology
29. Li Jinghui (undergraduate): Environmental Engineering, School of Resources and Environmental Engineering at Chongqing University
30. Liang Guicang (undergraduate): School of Business Administration at Huazhong University of Technology
31. Ba Licheng (undergraduate): Architectural Engineering, China Agricultural University
32. Yang Haitao (undergraduate): School of Electronic Engineering at Xidian University
33. Zhang Aimei (undergraduate): Industrial Design, School of Electronic Machinery at Xidian University

34. Mao Yansong (undergraduate): Electronics and Information Technology, Department of Computer Science at China University of Petroleum
35. Wang Ruiyun (undergraduate): Machinery Manufacturing Technology and Equipment, Department of Machinery at China University of Petroleum
36. Li Wang (undergraduate): Animal Nutrition and Feed Processing, College of Animal Science at Northwest Agriculture University
37. Wang Haipeng (undergraduate): Architectural Engineering, School of Architectural Engineering at Chongqing Jianzhu University
38. Li Huayi (undergraduate): School of Control Engineering at Harbin Institute of Technology
39. Li Yadong (undergraduate): School of Material Engineering at Harbin Institute of Technology
40. Wang Zhijie (undergraduate): Computer Science and Engineering, Harbin Institute of Technology
41. Cheng Chunguang (undergraduate): Trade and Economy, School of Social Science at Hefei University of Technology
42. Zhang Guodong (undergraduate): Geology and Mineral Exploration, School of Resources at Changchun University of Science and Technology
43. Fang Huali (undergraduate): Real Estate Management, School of Architectural Management and Engineering at Harbin University of Civil Engineering and Architecture
44. Wang Tiecheng (undergraduate): Industrial Automation, School of Mechatronics Engineering at Harbin University of Civil Engineering and Architecture
45. Yu Zhengfen (undergraduate): School of Architectural and Thermal Engineering at Harbin University of Civil Engineering and Architecture
46. Yu Yanhong (undergraduate): Industrial Automation, Department of Automatic Control at Daqing Petroleum Institute
47. Zhao Xiudong (undergraduate): Electronics and Information Technology, School of Computer Information Engineering at Yanshan University
48. Yuan Dayi (undergraduate): School of Mechanical Engineering at Yanshan University
49. Wang Ping (undergraduate): Ferrous Metallurgy, School of Metallurgy at University of Science and Technology Beijing
50. Han Zhijun (undergraduate): Accounting, School of Economics and Management at Northeastern University at Qinhuangdao
51. Gao Haiyan (undergraduate): Computer Engineering Department at Northeastern University at Qinhuangdao
52. Wang Hongbo (undergraduate): Computer Engineering Department at Northeastern University at Qinhuangdao
53. Wang Dianqing (undergraduate): Mining Engineering and Transportation, China University of Mining and Technology
54. Liu Weiling (undergraduate): Metal Materials and Heat Treatment, College of Mechanical Engineering at Liaoning Technical University
55. Zhu Fuyun (undergraduate): Department of Business Administration at Northwest Academy of Light Industry

56. Gu Yuwang (undergraduate): Electrical Engineering and Its Automation, Northwestern Polytechnical University
57. Wang Lili (undergraduate): School of International Economy and Trade at Jilin Industrial University
58. Geng Shuangyu (undergraduate): Department of Business Administration at Hebei University of Technology
59. Bai Mingjie (undergraduate): Department of Electronic Engineering at Hebei University of Technology
60. Feng Jidong (undergraduate): Department of Materials Science and Engineering at Hebei University of Technology
61. Zhu Jianjun (undergraduate): Department of Computer Science and Engineering at Hebei University of Technology
62. Zhang Yuchi (undergraduate): Department of Mechanical Electronic Engineering at Hebei University of Technology
63. Wang Jianmin (undergraduate): Department of Mechanical Electronic Engineering at Hebei University of Technology
64. Tan Shuming (undergraduate): Electronic Engineering (Wireless Technology), Harbin Engineering University
65. Wen Zhigang (undergraduate): Urban Construction, Xiangtan University
66. Li Haoyong (undergraduate): Air Force Aviation Academy at Changchun
67. Ren Fumin (undergraduate): Air Force Aviation Academy at Changchun
68. Lan Wenfu (undergraduate): PLA Engineering Academy of Armored Forces
69. He Shui (undergraduate): School of Mechanical Engineering at Dalian Maritime University
70. Zhang Baolong (undergraduate): Marine Management, Marine Department at Jimei Maritime Academy
71. Meng Qinggang (undergraduate): Marine Management, Power and Mechanical Engineering Department at Hebei University of Technology
72. Zhang Dan (undergraduate): Third Detachment Squadron, PLA Shijiazhuang Army Academy
73. Ren Yongjie (undergraduate): Fourth Squadron, PLA Shenyang Artillery Academy
74. Zhang Lei (undergraduate): Sports Health Care and Rehabilitation, Shanghai University of Sport
75. Wu Haoying (undergraduate): Preschool Education, Hebei University
76. Yan Lijuan (undergraduate): Archival Science, Department of Information Management at Hebei University
77. Lai Weidong (undergraduate): Applied Physics, Department of Physics at Hebei University
78. Xing Shengli (undergraduate): Economics, Nanjing Academy of Posts and Telecommunications
79. Bai Lianming (undergraduate): City Gas Engineering, Department of Thermal Engineering at Tianjin Chengjian Institute
80. Zhang Jieran (undergraduate): Welding Technology and Equipment, Wuhan University of Jiaotong and Technology

81. Bao Chunxia (undergraduate): Architectural Engineering, Department of Civil Engineering at Tianjin Chengjian Institute
82. Song Yunfeng (undergraduate): Transportation and Civil Engineering, Wuhan University of Jiaotong and Technology
83. Du Jifeng (undergraduate): Geography Education, Hebei Normal University
84. Li Jia (undergraduate): Department of Chinese at Hebei Normal University
85. Shi Ruifa (undergraduate): Department of Chinese at Hebei Normal University
86. Cao Fengyu (undergraduate): Department of Mathematics at Hebei Normal University
87. Zhang Chaohe (undergraduate): Finance and Accounting, Department of Economics and Finance at Hebei Normal University
88. Liu Qizhi (undergraduate): Materials Science and Engineering, Shandong Institute of Construction Material Industry
89. Zhang Jinling (undergraduate): Management Engineering, Shenyang Architectural and Civil Engineering Institute
90. Li Xia (undergraduate): Management Engineering, Chongqing Institute of Posts and Telecommunications
91. Qi Chao (undergraduate): Department of Computer Engineering at Changchun Institute of Posts and Telecommunications University
92. Zhao Chunling (undergraduate): Department of Engineering at Inner Mongolia University of Technology
93. Yang Rui'e (undergraduate): Fine Chemicals, Fushun Institute of Petroleum at Liaoyang
94. Zhang Aimin (undergraduate): Institute for Forest Products Industry at Northeast Forestry University
95. Shen Yanjie (undergraduate): Industrial Automation, Department of Automatic Control Engineering at Northeast China Institute of Electric Power
96. Ma Liyao (undergraduate): Industrial Automation, Department of Electric Science at Fuzhou University
97. Xu Weijun (undergraduate): Power Systems and Automation, Department of Electrical Engineering at Jiaozuo Institute of Technology
98. Zhang Li (undergraduate): Fashion Design, Garment Department at Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology
99. Han Fang (undergraduate): Industrial Foreign Trade, School of Economics and Management at Central South Institute of Technology
100. Lü Wei (undergraduate): College of Traditional Chinese Medicine at Hebei Medical University
101. Han Huiyi (undergraduate): Architectural Engineering, Qingdao Institute of Civil Engineering and Architecture
102. Li Baiyan (undergraduate): Department of Machinery at Dalian Fisheries College
103. Zhou Xiangdong (undergraduate): Architectural Engineering, Shanghai Railway University
104. Li Guofeng (undergraduate): Medical Laboratory, College of Health Technology at Hebei Medical University

105. Xu Xiaojuan (undergraduate): Medical Imaging, College of Health Technology at Hebei Medical University
106. Qiao Yajing (undergraduate): Traditional Chinese Medicine, Chengde Medical College
107. Li Shuchun (undergraduate): Traditional Chinese Medicine, Chengde Medical College
108. Wang Lifeng (undergraduate): Music, Department of Art at Hebei University
109. Wang Yinghui (undergraduate): Department of Mechanical and Electronic Engineering at Taiyuan Heavy Machinery Institute
110. Liu Jianhua (undergraduate): Pediatrics, Department of Basic Medical Sciences at Hebei Medical University
111. Yan Lina (undergraduate): Nursing, Chengde Medical College
112. Yin Guichun (undergraduate): Nursing, Chengde Medical College
113. Su Xichun (undergraduate): Dyeing and Finishing Engineering, Department of Textile Chemistry at Northwest Textile Science and Technology College
114. Yu Tao (undergraduate): Electronic Engineering Department at Nanchang Institute of Aeronautical Technology
115. Mao Wei (undergraduate): Department of Mechanical Engineering at Nanchang Institute of Aeronautical Technology
116. Sun Jiming (undergraduate): City Gas Engineering, Department of Chemical Industry at Anshan Institute of Iron and Steel Technology
117. Shang Chenxu (undergraduate): Industrial Automation, Department of Automation and Computing Engineering at Baotou Institute of Iron and Steel Technology
118. Zheng Yaguang (undergraduate): Nursing, Chengde Medical College
119. Wang Feng (undergraduate): School of Forestry Tourism at Central South Institute of Forestry
120. Cao Haisheng (undergraduate): Department of Machinery at Northwest Textile Science and Technology College
121. Hou Yongrui (undergraduate): Clothing, Craft Art Department at Hebei Normal University
122. Wang Guicheng (undergraduate): Desert Control Department at Inner Mongolia Institute of Forestry
123. Liu Xiaoyan (undergraduate): Industrial and Commercial Administration, Department of Management Sciences at Northwest Institute for Nationalities
124. Yu Xudong (undergraduate): Faculty of Law at Anhui Institute of Finance and Trade
125. Wang Jili (undergraduate): Investment Economics, Department of Planning and Statistics at Shanxi Institute of Finance and Economics
126. Yu Haijun (undergraduate): Marketing, Department of Economics and Trade at Shanxi Institute of Mining and Technology
127. Bai Pengfei (undergraduate): Department of Textiles at Tianjin Institute of Textile Science and Technology

128. Fu Chaojun (undergraduate): Department of Mechanical Engineering at Tianjin Institute of Textile Science and Technology
129. Zhang Mingfeng (undergraduate): Ore-Dressing Engineering, Department of Resources Engineering at Hebei Institute of Technology
130. Ma Zhongyang (undergraduate): Ore-Dressing Engineering, Department of Resources Engineering at Hebei Institute of Technology
131. Yang Jie (undergraduate): High-Pressure Torsion, Department of Metallurgy at Hebei Institute of Technology
132. He Yuandong (undergraduate): Chemical Engineering and Technology, Wuhan Metallurgy University of Science and Technology
133. Zhang Jun (undergraduate): Inorganic Nonmetallic Materials, Department of Materials Science and Engineering at Hebei Institute of Technology
134. Cao Guangyu (undergraduate): Machine Design and Manufacturing, Department of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering at Hebei Institute of Architecture and Civil Engineering
135. Yu Xiaohong (undergraduate): Water Supply and Drainage Engineering, Department of Urban Construction at Hebei Institute of Architecture and Civil Engineering
136. Heng Qiang (undergraduate): Measurement Control Technique and Instruments, Department of Automation at Hebei Institute of Technology
137. Liu Chengyong (undergraduate): Automation and Computer Engineering, Baotou Institute of Iron and Steel Technology
138. Liu Shihui (undergraduate): Wuhan Metallurgy University of Science and Technology
139. Wang Xuesong (undergraduate): Management Engineering, Wuhan Metallurgy University of Science and Technology
140. Ma Xiaorui (undergraduate): Machine Design and Manufacturing, School of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering at Hebei Institute of Architecture and Civil Engineering
141. Zhao Ming (undergraduate): Surveying Engineering, Department of Energy Resources Engineering at Hebei Institute of Technology
142. Shi Yanqing (undergraduate): Department of Machinery at Hebei Institute of Technology
143. Fang Daguang (undergraduate): Clinical Medicine, Department of Basic Medical Sciences at Hebei Medical University
144. Shen Baojian (undergraduate): Inorganic Nonmetallic Materials, Department of Materials Science at Hebei Institute of Technology
145. Wu Zhimin (undergraduate): Ferrous Metallurgy, Department of Metallurgy at Hebei Institute of Technology
146. Sun Xiaoyun (undergraduate): Urban Construction, College of Urban and Rural Construction at Agricultural University of Hebei
147. Wang Zhanling (undergraduate): Animal Breeding, College of Animal Science and Technology at Agricultural University of Hebei
148. Yan Qingwen (undergraduate): Changchun Institute of Posts and Telecommunications

149. Guo Haiyan (undergraduate): Department of Mechanical Engineering at Hebei University of Science and Technology
150. Yang Mingling (undergraduate): Department of Environmental Engineering at Hebei University of Science and Technology
151. Li Guoqing (undergraduate): Department of Environmental Engineering at Hebei University of Science and Technology
152. Ding Baishun (undergraduate): Water Supply and Drainage, Department of Urban Construction at Hebei Institute of Architecture and Technology
153. Bi Jingli (undergraduate): Fermentation Engineering, Department of Light Industrial Engineering at Hebei University of Science and Technology
154. Wang Shutian (undergraduate): Department of Material Science and Engineering at Hebei University of Science and Technology
155. Gao Xianli (undergraduate): Department of Business Administration at Shijiazhuang University of Economics
156. Zhang Zaozao (undergraduate): Décor Art Design, Garment Department at Tianjin Institute of Textile Science and Technology
157. Zhang Shujun (technical): PLA Bengbu Tank Academy
158. Su Jinpo (technical): Electronic Department, College of Industrial Technology at Harbin University of Science and Technology
159. Wang Xiaoxin (technical): Clinical Medicine, Department of Basic Medical Sciences at Hebei Medical University
160. Yang Shujun (technical): Integrative Medicine, College of Traditional Chinese Medicine at Hebei Medical University
161. Zhao Chunhong (technical): Civil Engineering, Changchun Industrial Higher Vocational Training School
162. Luo Zhiming (technical): Thermal Parameter Measurement and Control Technologies, Beijing Electric Power Higher Vocational Training School
163. Gao Yu (technical): Dual-Use Buildings, North China Institute of Water Resources and Electric Power
164. Qian Yali (technical): Clinical Medicine, Department of Basic Medical Sciences at Hebei Medical University
165. Chen Hairan (technical): Computer Application and Maintenance, Department of Electronics at Jilin Electrification Higher Vocational Training School
166. Li Guoqiang (technical): Insurance, Department of National Insurance at Baoding Financial Higher Vocational Training School
167. Wang Jin (technical): Marketing, Department of Business Administration at Chongqing Petroleum Higher Vocational Training School
168. Bao Jianxin (technical): Insurance, Baoding Financial Higher Vocational Training School
169. Xiao Lihua (technical): Economy and Trade English, College of Liberal Arts at North China Jiaotong University
170. Jia Haifeng (technical): Water Supply and Drainage Engineering, Department of Construction at Chongqing Architecture Higher Vocational Training School
171. Zhao Zelin (technical): Electrical Construction Technology, Department of Construction at Chongqing Architecture Higher Vocational Training School

172. Yang Shuyu (technical): Computerized Accounting, Department of Economics and Trade at Lianyungang Chemical Industry Higher Vocational Training School
173. Sun Zhihui (technical): Electrical Automation Technology, Department of Automatic Control at Jilin Electrification Higher Vocational Training School
174. Liu Yanhui (technical): Building Construction and Decoration, Southwest Jiaotong University
175. Zhao Xiuyan (technical): Television News, Hebei Normal University
176. Liu Zongwei (technical): Secretary in the Modern Workplace, Department of Chinese at Hebei Normal University
177. Wang Xingming (technical): National Economy and Administration, Department of National Economy at Hebei Normal University
178. Bai Yunbo (technical): National Economy and Administration, Department of National Economy at Hebei Normal University
179. Liu Wenzeng (technical): Mechanical and Electronic Engineering, Department of Machinery at Hebei Institute of Technology
180. Liu Xinchun (technical): Law, Hebei University
181. Zhang Dongsheng (technical): Applied Electronics Technology, Ordnance Engineering College
182. Luo Zhengchao (technical): Secretary, Department of Humanities and Law at Shijiazhuang College of Economics
183. Zhang Chengfeng (technical): Engineering Survey, Benxi Metallurgy Higher Vocational Training School
184. Zhang Yadong (technical): Environmental Monitoring, Benxi Metallurgy Higher Vocational Training School
185. Cao Yan (technical): Welding Technology and Equipment, Department of Machinery at Chengde Petroleum Higher Vocational Training School
186. Min Jianhua (technical): Machine Manufacturing Technology and Equipment, Department of Machinery at Chengde Petroleum Higher Vocational Training School
187. Su Yongliang (technical): Automotive and Tractor Manufacturing and Maintenance, Department of Thermal Engineering at Chengde Petroleum Higher Vocational Training School
188. An Lijuan (technical): Numerical Control Technology and Applications, Department of Mechanical Engineering at Shenyang Industry College Vocational Training School
189. Hu Yufeng (technical): Clinical Medicine, Chengde Medical College
190. Zhang Ziming (technical): Clinical Medicine, Chengde Medical College
191. Zhao Junlai (technical): Management Information System, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Department at Hebei University of Science and Technology
192. Gao Zongbo (technical): Textile Machinery, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Department at Hebei University of Science and Technology
193. Guo Hongbin (technical): Automation, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Department at Hebei University of Science and Technology

194. Chen Jinxia (technical): Textile Technology, Second Department of Textile Engineering at Hebei University of Science and Technology
195. Zhang Mingchao (technical): Textile Technology, Second Department of Textile Engineering at Hebei University of Science and Technology
196. Qi Guanghui (technical): Clinical Science, Handan Higher Vocational Medical College
197. Tan Zhiyong (technical): Clinical Science, Handan Higher Vocational Medical College
198. Dong Jinxiang (technical): Computers, Hebei University of Technology
199. Su Xihua (technical): Industrial Equipment Installation Engineering, Department of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering at Hebei Institute of Architecture Engineering
200. Zhan Xiuling (technical): Nursing, PLA Shijiazhuang Higher Vocational Medical College
201. Fu Hong (technical): Department of Animal Husbandry Engineering at Zhangjiakou Agriculture Higher Vocational Training School
202. Wang Chunhong (technical): Department of Economics Management at Zhangjiakou Agriculture Higher Vocational Training School
203. Zhao Zhiguo (technical): Industrial Enterprise Management, School of Economics and Management Engineering at Handan University
204. Min Zhiqiang (technical): Agricultural Marketing, Handan Agriculture Higher Vocational Training School
205. Yu Wangyang (technical): Electronics, Chengde University
206. Hou Zaiqi (technical): English, Chengde University
207. Fu Xiaoyu (technical): English, Chengde University
208. Wang Jiubo (technical): Secretary, Chengde University
209. Chen Wenchao (technical): Changchun Institute of Posts and Telecommunications (training for specific post)
210. Li Xiuhong (technical): Cangzhou Normal College (training for specific post)
211. Yu Xiaohua (technical): Computers, Chengde TV University
212. Zheng Renfang (technical): Computers, Chengde TV University
213. Wu Yuangang (technical): Computers, Chengde TV University
214. Bu Cuiping (technical): Computers, Chengde TV University
215. Sun Yuelan (technical): Industrial and Commercial Administration, Chengde TV University
216. Li Ying (technical): Industrial and Commercial Administration, Chengde TV University
217. Liu Yongli (technical): Industrial and Commercial Administration, Chengde TV University
218. Fang Yujie (technical): Law, Chengde TV University
219. Wu Xiaohui (technical): Physical Education, Langfang Teachers College
220. Zhang Hui (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
221. He Mingxi (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
222. Qian Ruihong (technical): Chinese, Chengde Normal College
223. Wu Chunjie (technical): Chinese, Chengde Normal College

224. Liu Yufeng (technical): Chinese, Chengde Normal College
225. Yang Xiaohui (technical): English, Chengde Normal College
226. Li Guifeng (technical): English, Chengde Normal College
227. Li Yongzhen (technical): English, Chengde Normal College
228. Qin Haitao (technical): English, Chengde Normal College
229. Cao Yuelei (technical): Physics, Chengde Normal College
230. Peng Feng (technical): Chinese, Chengde Normal College
231. Shi Ruixin (technical): Chinese, Chengde Normal College
232. Zang Huijing (technical): English, Chengde Normal College
233. Yang Lihong (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
234. Lan Wenkui (technical): Chemistry, Chengde Normal College
235. Xu Xiaoli (technical): Chemistry, Chengde Normal College
236. Cao Guohong (technical): English, Hebei Normal University for Nationalities
237. Qin Hao (technical): Politics, Chengde Normal College
238. Li Zongming (technical): Politics, Chengde Normal College
239. Zhao Chunlong (technical): Physics, Chengde Normal College
240. Xu Kai (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
241. Zhang Dongshun (technical): Chinese, Chengde Normal College
242. Wang Wenlong (technical): Chinese, Chengde Normal College
243. Guo Xinyi (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
244. Xu Guihong (technical): Chinese, Hebei Normal University for Nationalities
245. Zhao Yajuan (technical): English, Hebei Normal University for Nationalities
246. Li Jing (technical): Chinese, Hebei Normal University for Nationalities
247. Meng Qingli (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
248. Hu Xiaoyuan (technical): Politics, Chengde Normal College
249. Hu Zhanfeng (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
250. Yuan Lili (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
251. Zheng Weifeng (technical): Physics, Chengde Normal College
252. Cui Xiuqin (technical): Physics, Chengde Normal College
253. Wang Zhenguo (technical): Chinese, Chengde Normal College
254. Liu Yanzhong (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
255. Jiang Xiuyang (technical): Chinese, Chengde Normal College
256. Wang Haili (technical): Chinese, Chengde Normal College
257. Liang Guohua (technical): English, Chengde Normal College
258. Yan Jinrong (technical): English, Chengde Normal College
259. Liu Zhiguo (technical): Chinese, Chengde Normal College
260. Lin Xiangyun (technical): English, Metallurgical Industry School
261. Han Jingchun (secondary): Control of Goods and Materials, Baicheng Forestry School
262. Wang Yanguo (secondary): Coke and Chemistry, Hebei College of Industry and Technology
263. Wang Bingxi (secondary): Hebei Police Academy
264. Teng Jinpeng (secondary): Welding, Hebei Vocational College of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering
265. Zhang Lei (secondary): Marketing, Hebei Supply and Marketing School
266. Han Zhao (secondary): Secretary in the Modern Workplace, Hebei Tax School

267. Feng Lihua (secondary): Computerized Accounting, Hebei Tax School
268. Xu Xingrong (secondary): Engineering Management, Hebei Jiaotong Vocational and Technical College
269. Liu Fuli (secondary): Computerized Financial Accounting, Hebei Jiaotong Vocational and Technical College
270. Ma Yunfeng (secondary): Hydrology and Water Resources, North China Institute of Water Resources and Electric Power
271. Shi Guofeng (secondary): Hebei Vocational Academy of Judiciary
272. Li Jinsheng (secondary): Hebei School of Finance and Business
273. Zhao Xufei (secondary): Hebei School of Finance and Business
274. Xia Xiaoyu (secondary): Computerized Financial Accounting, Hebei Jiaotong Vocational and Technical College
275. Gou Limin (secondary): Auditing, Qinghuangdao School of Coal Industry Management
276. Qiu Dianqiang (secondary): Water Conservancy and Hydropower Engineering and Construction, North China University of Water Institute and Electric Power
277. Yang Zhiqiang (secondary): Water Conservancy and Hydropower Engineering and Construction, North China Institute of Water Resources and Electric Power
278. Zhou Zhicheng (secondary): Water Conservancy and Hydropower Engineering and Construction, North China Institute of Water Resources and Electric Power
279. Zhang Ning (secondary): Hebei People's Police Academy
280. Cheng Xin (secondary): Hebei Vocational Academy of Judiciary

Fengning Number One Secondary School
Higher Education Admissions List for 1998

1. Yang Chengwu (undergraduate): Communication Countermeasures for Command, PLA Electronic Engineering Institute (Hefei)
2. Zhang Xiaowei (undergraduate): Oil and Gas Storage and Transportation Engineering, PLA Logistic Engineering University (Chongqing)
3. Teng Lijun (undergraduate): Armored Forces Command, Command Academy of Armored Forces
4. Zhang Lei (undergraduate): Marine Navigation, Merchant Marine School at Shanghai Maritime Institute
5. Zhu Guibin (undergraduate): Agronomy, Agricultural Machinery and Horticulture, PLA Institute of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry
6. Wang Hongzhi (undergraduate): Engine Management, Department of Engine Management at Jimei Maritime Academy
7. Wang Lei (undergraduate): Marine Navigation, Dalian Maritime University
8. He Yuxia (undergraduate): Computer Application, Hebei Youth Training College
9. Gao Xiaoming (undergraduate): Accounting, School of Economics and Management at Tsinghua University
10. Li Fulin (undergraduate): Computer Software, PLA Electronic Technology Academy

11. Li Yunchuan (undergraduate): Computer and Application, Minzu University of China
12. Zhang Lei (undergraduate): Traditional Chinese Medicine, Shenyang Pharmaceutical University
13. Yan Jingya (undergraduate): Civil Engineering, Tongji University
14. Hou Yujing (undergraduate): DeHeng College of Lawyers at Jilin University
15. Pan Yi (undergraduate): Electronics and Information Systems, Jilin University
16. Zhang Chunyan (undergraduate): Environmental Planning and Management, Department of Environmental Sciences at Jilin University
17. Cui Yandong (undergraduate): Mechanical Engineering and Automation, College of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering at Hohai University
18. Chen Weiji (undergraduate): Thermal Energy and Power Engineering, Shanghai Jiao Tong University
19. Zhang Shujun (undergraduate): Chinese, Lanzhou University
20. Mao Huanda (undergraduate): Construction Engineering, Civil Engineering School at Hohai University
21. Sun Jinpeng (undergraduate): Physics, Department of Physics at Nankai University
22. Cao Guangyu (undergraduate): International Economics and Trade, School of Economics and Management at Beijing Forestry University
23. Meng Qingzhou (undergraduate): Civil Engineering, School of Civil and Architectural Engineering at North China Jiaotong University
24. Li Haiyan (undergraduate): Architectural Engineering, Department of Chemistry at Nankai University
25. Yang Zhirong (undergraduate): Architectural Engineering, College of Natural Sciences at Nanjing University of Science and Technology
26. Yang Guoqiang (undergraduate): Architectural Engineering, School of Architecture and Urban Planning at Chongqing University
27. Zhang Xiufeng (undergraduate): Finance, School of Economics and Business Administration at Chongqing University
28. Jin Xiwei (undergraduate): Hydrogeology and Engineering Geology, Department of Civil Engineering at Hohai University
29. Xu Xiaoguang (undergraduate): Accounting, School of Management Engineering at Chongqing Jianzhu University
30. Zhang Rui (undergraduate): Applied Mathematics, School of Basic Science at Harbin University of Civil Engineering and Architecture
31. Lin Tiesong (undergraduate): Materials Science and Engineering, Harbin University of Civil Engineering and Architecture
32. Wang Jun (undergraduate): Agriculture Environmental Protection, College of Land and Environment at Shenyang Agricultural University
33. Liu Zhiqiang (undergraduate): Computer Science and Technology, College of Electronics and Information Engineering at Liaoning Technical University
34. Yan Xiaoqiang (undergraduate): Automation, Department of Electrical Engineering at Liaoning Technical University

35. Teng Long (undergraduate): Department of Architectural and Thermal Engineering at Harbin University of Civil Engineering and Architecture
36. Xia Liangyu (undergraduate): Applied Physics, China University of Petroleum
37. Zhang Pengfei (undergraduate): Business English, Department of Foreign Languages at Northeastern University
38. An Yujia (undergraduate): Computer Software, Peking University
39. Liu Haijun (undergraduate): College of Mechanical Science and Engineering at Jilin University of Technology
40. Wang Haibin (undergraduate): Thermal Energy and Power Engineering, Jilin University of Technology
41. Zhao Xihong (undergraduate): Department of Applied Physics at Jilin University of Technology
42. Liu Yonggang (undergraduate): College of Materials Science and Engineering at Jilin University of Technology
43. Wang Xin (undergraduate): School of Economics and Management at Jilin University of Technology
44. He Jianxin (undergraduate): School of Computer Science and Engineering at Hebei University of Technology
45. Wang Mingpeng (undergraduate): School of Electrical Engineering at Hebei University of Technology
46. Wang Jinfeng (undergraduate): Department of Automatic Control at University of Electronic Science and Technology of China
47. Ma Donghua (undergraduate): Machine Design and Manufacturing, Harbin Engineering University
48. An Yali (undergraduate): Economic Law, Harbin Engineering University
49. Qian Yanping (undergraduate): Materials Science and Engineering, Harbin Engineering University
50. Zhao Jihong (undergraduate): Mechatronic Engineering, Hefei University of Technology
51. Xiao Liang (undergraduate): School of Management at Hefei University of Technology
52. Chen Shuhai (undergraduate): Applied Physics, Hefei University of Technology
53. An Peng (undergraduate): Civil Engineering, Hefei University of Technology
54. Su Xijun (undergraduate): Advertising, Hebei University
55. Song Fengru (undergraduate): English, Hebei Normal University
56. Cao Wei (undergraduate): Engineering Mechanics, Southwest Jiaotong University
57. Wang Hao (undergraduate): Marine Engineering, Harbin Engineering University
58. Wang Hailong (undergraduate): Physiological Technology, Yunnan University
59. Ge Man (undergraduate): Physics Education, Hebei Normal University

60. Xu Ting (undergraduate): Physics Education, Hebei Normal University
61. Liu Fuli (undergraduate): Department of Chinese Language and Literature, Hebei Normal University
62. Zhang Xin (undergraduate): Department of Politics Education at Hebei Normal University
63. Li Xiujuan (undergraduate): Department of Chinese Language and Literature at Hebei Normal University
64. Wu You (undergraduate): Law, Hebei Normal University
65. Wang Shuang (undergraduate): Finance, Hebei University
66. Guo Sijia (undergraduate): Department of Japanese Language at Hebei University
67. Chen Lihui (undergraduate): Electrical Engineering, Fuzhou University
68. Dong Jiwei (undergraduate): Computer Science and Technology, Northeastern University at Qinhuangdao
69. Zhang Lili (undergraduate): Environmental Art and Design, Hebei University of Technology
70. Jin Xiaoyu (undergraduate): Quality Engineering, China Jiliang University
71. Liu Jing (undergraduate): Social Work and Administration, China Women's University
72. Wang Haibo (undergraduate): English Department at Changchun Normal University
73. Xu Xiaodong (undergraduate): Water Supply and Drainage Engineering, Tianjin Chengjian University
74. Liu Xinghua (undergraduate): Materials Science and Engineering, Tianjin Chengjian University
75. Yang Jie (undergraduate): Accounting, Qingdao Institute of Civil Engineering and Architecture
76. Liu Yang (undergraduate): Clinical Medicine, Shanghai Railway University
77. Wang Jing (undergraduate): Electronics and Information Technology, Xi'an University of Technology
78. Lu Na (undergraduate): Accounting, Qingdao Institute of Civil Engineering and Architecture
79. Shen Keqin (undergraduate): Environmental Engineering, Nanchang Hangkong Institute of Technology University
80. Wang Guimin (undergraduate): Polymer Materials and Engineering, Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology
81. Zhang Guangcheng (undergraduate): Architectural Engineering, Xi'an University of Technology
82. Sun Qingchuan (undergraduate): Industrial Design, Harbin University of Science and Technology
83. Lu Xiaocang (undergraduate): Geotechnical Engineering, North China College of Water Resources and Electric Power
84. Chen Shuming (undergraduate): Financial Management, Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics

85. Xu Yanan (undergraduate): Industrial Foreign Trade, Shenyang University of Technology
86. Liu Xiuli (undergraduate): Traditional Chinese Medicine, Hebei Medical University
87. Bian Zhenguang (undergraduate): Traditional Chinese Medicine, Hebei Medical University
88. Liu Shiyan (undergraduate): Traditional Chinese Medicine, Hebei Medical University
89. Wang Shujun (undergraduate): Acupuncture, Hebei Medical University
90. Wu Yongdong (undergraduate): Clinical Medicine, Hebei Medical University
91. Song Xiaojuan (undergraduate): Clinical Medicine, Hebei Medical University
92. Wu Xiaohui (undergraduate): Clinical Medicine, Hebei Medical University
93. Yao Zhengang (undergraduate): Clinical Medicine, Hebei Medical University
94. Han Songyun (undergraduate): Clinical Medicine, Hebei Medical University
95. Xie Wenchao (undergraduate): Pharmacy, Hebei Medical University
96. Liu Jianhua (undergraduate): Applied Chemistry, Shandong Institute of Construction Material Industry
97. Ren Hongwei (undergraduate): Clinical Medicine, Hebei Medical University
98. Yu Xiaohong (undergraduate): Biological Chemical Engineering, Dalian Nationalities College
99. Liu Haiyan (undergraduate): Environmental Engineering, Jiaozuo Mining College
100. Zhang Jianhong (undergraduate): Tourism, Central South College of Forestry
101. Li Chunyong (undergraduate): Traditional Chinese Medicine, Chengde Medical College
102. Liu Minghui (undergraduate): Clinical Medicine, Chengde Medical College
103. Zhang He (undergraduate): Nursing, Chengde Medical College
104. Xing Lujun (undergraduate): Grain Storage and Transportation, Department of Grain Storage at Zhengzhou Grain College
105. Guo Zhuojian (undergraduate): Architectural Engineering, Department of Architectural Engineering at Zhengzhou Grain College
106. Geng Yanling (undergraduate): Chemical Engineering and Technology, Wuhan Metallurgy University of Science and Technology
107. Wu Hailong (undergraduate): Industrial Automation, School of Gold at Northeastern University
108. Du Xuejie (undergraduate): Traditional Chinese Medicine, Department of Traditional Chinese Medicine at Zhangjiakou Medical College
109. Yuan Dongli (undergraduate): Agricultural Water Conservancy Engineering, Agricultural University of Hebei

110. Li Mingxing (undergraduate): Aquaculture, College of Animal Science and Technology, Hebei Normal College of Agricultural Technology
111. Guo Ruili (undergraduate): Industry Analysis, School of Materials Science and Engineering at Southwest Institute of Technology
112. Liu Chunhui (undergraduate): Environmental Science and Engineering, Hebei University of Science and Technology
113. Tan Zhiyong (undergraduate): Heating, Ventilation and Air-Conditioning (HVAC) Engineering, School of Urban Construction at Hebei Institute of Architecture and Civil Engineering
114. Zhang Yanguo (undergraduate): Control Science and Engineering, West Campus of Hebei University of Science and Technology
115. Wang Yunling (undergraduate): Techniques in Decorative Arts, School of Architectural Engineering at Chongqing Higher Vocational College of Petroleum
116. Fang Haisheng (undergraduate): Industrial Enterprise Business Management, School of Business Administration at Beijing Information Engineering Institute
117. Ju Yadong (undergraduate): Biological Science and Engineering, Hebei University of Science and Technology
118. Li Yanwen (technical): Pharmaceutical Machinery Manufacturing and Maintenance, Shanghai Medical Instrumentation College
119. Wang Dali (technical): Mold Design and Manufacturing, Harbin University of Science and Technology
120. Wang Jianguo (undergraduate): Computer Applications, Ordnance Engineering College at Harbin University of Science and Technology
121. Fang Xinling (undergraduate): Physical and Chemical Analyses and Separation Technology, North China University of Technology
122. Guo Yanli (undergraduate): Ore-Dressing Engineering, Department of Resources Engineering, Hebei Institute of Technology
123. Gao Yu (technical): Asset Valuation, Harbin Engineering Higher Vocational College
124. Fan Yinglei (technical): Real Estate Operations and Management, Changchun Higher Vocational College of Architecture
125. Zou Shihua (undergraduate): Industrial Automation, School of Automation at Hebei Institute of Technology
126. Ding Xiaoning (technical): Accounting, Baoding Business College
127. Su Zhanhui (technical): Traditional Chinese Medicine, College of Traditional Chinese Medicine at Hebei Medical University
128. Liu Yuhong (technical): Advanced Nursing, Hebei Medical University
129. Li Ying (technical): Advanced Nursing, Hebei Medical University
130. Zhang Lixin (technical): Integrative Medicine, College of Traditional Chinese Medicine at Hebei Medical University
131. Zhao Liyou (undergraduate): Industrial Equipment Installation Engineering, Department of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering at Hebei Institute of Architecture and Civil Engineering

132. Gao Xiaoli (undergraduate): Nursing, Chengde Medical College
133. Wen Jingbo (undergraduate): Business English, Hebei University of Economics and Business
134. Liu Zhanhong (undergraduate): Nursing, Chengde Medical College
135. Wang Juhong (technical): Building Construction Engineering, Luoyang Higher Vocational College of Technology
136. Liu Hao (undergraduate): Tourism Management, Hebei University of Economics and Business
137. Jin Lin (technical): Automotive Technologies, Benxi Metallurgy College
138. Liu Jianping (technical): Nursing, Chengde Medical College
139. Zhu Haiyang (technical): Chemical Coal Cleaning Methods, North China Higher Vocational College of Mining and Technology
140. Guo Yuying (technical): Administration, School of National Economics at Hebei Normal University
141. Wang Xiaoyan (technical): Nursing, PLA Shijiazhuang Medical College
142. Zhu Lisong (technical): Clinical Medicine, Handan Medical College
143. Liu Junyong (technical): Computer and Application, Hebei Engineering and Technical College
144. Li Nan (technical): Electric Power Engineering, Hebei Engineering and Technical College
145. Zhao Cuiyun (technical): Nursing, PLA Shijiazhuang Medical College
146. Zhao Liping (technical): Nursing, PLA Shijiazhuang Medical College
147. Mu Lin (technical): Tourism, Chengde Vocational Technical College of Nationalities
148. Sun Dexin (technical): Tourism, Chengde Vocational Technical College of Nationalities
149. Liu Junjie (technical): Architectural Engineering and Civil Architecture, Shijiazhuang Vocational Technology Institute
150. Liang Xinran (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
151. Zhao Lijuan (technical): Chinese, Chengde Normal College
152. Hao Zhigang (technical): Chinese, Chengde Normal College
153. Fang Jianmin (technical): Architectural Engineering and Civil Architecture, Shijiazhuang Vocational Technology Institute
154. Xing Guoyun (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
155. Wang Hongli (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
156. Yang Yingge (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
157. Xiao Haidong (technical): English, Chengde Vocational Technical College of Nationalities
158. Zhao Yin (technical): Marketing, School of Economics and Management at Hebei University of Science and Technology
159. Bai Chunyu (technical) Machinery and Electronics, College of Mechanical and Electronic Engineering at Hebei University of Science and Technology
160. Li Chunlai (technical): Electronics, Chengde Vocational Technical College of Nationalities

161. Teng Tianlong (technical): Electronics, Chengde Vocational Technical College of Nationalities
162. Liang Yan (technical): Electronics, Chengde Vocational Technical College of Nationalities
163. Zheng Wenjing (technical): English, Chengde Normal College
164. Zhao Jinlong (technical): Politics, Chengde Normal College
165. Liu Weihua (technical): Biochemistry, Chengde Normal College
166. He Shuying (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
167. Yang Jianjun (technical): English, Chengde Normal College
168. Dong Yue'e (technical): Chinese, Chengde Normal College
169. Song Zengqiang (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
170. He Shubing (technical): Chinese, Chengde Normal College
171. He Wei (technical): English, Chengde Normal College
172. Song Xiumin (technical): English, Chengde Normal College
173. Wang Shuangyan (technical): English, Chengde Normal College
174. Wu Xiao (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
175. Li Xiaozhou (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
176. Cao Ruifang (technical): English, Chengde Normal College
177. Bai Xueyang (technical): English, Chengde Normal College
178. Song Xiaomin (technical): English, Chengde Normal College
179. Sun Liyan (technical): Politics, Chengde Normal College
180. Wu Zhiguo (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
181. Zheng Renfang (technical): Chemistry, Chengde Normal College
182. Xiao Yundong (technical): English, Chengde Normal College
183. Han Jingchun (technical): Chemistry, Chengde Normal College
184. Yu Wangyang (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
185. Sun Yuelan (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
186. Wei Zheng (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
187. Jiang Yanlong (technical): Physics, Chengde Normal College
188. Ma Zhijing (technical): Chinese, Chengde Normal College
189. Xu Yülan (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
190. Meng Xiaojuan (technical): English, Chengde Normal College
191. Song Jifeng (technical): Physics, Chengde Normal College
192. Cong Yandong (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
193. Chen Dan (technical): English, Chengde Normal College
194. Shen Lingwei (technical): Chinese, Chengde Normal College
195. Zhu Siguang (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
196. Fang Yujie (technical): Politics, Chengde Normal College
197. An Xiujuan (technical): Computers, Chengde Normal College
198. Pang Jianye (technical): Computers, Chengde Normal College
199. Li Yanhua (technical): Computers, Chengde Normal College
200. Zhang Guiyu (technical): Computers, Chengde Normal College
201. Liu Songtao (technical): Chemistry, Chengde Normal College
202. Liu Jichun (technical): Mathematics, Chengde Normal College
203. Bai Yanhui (technical): Biology, Langfang Teachers College

204. Song Xianghui (technical): Hebei Vocational College of Politics and Law
205. Huang Xuemin (technical): Physical Education, Langfang Teachers College
206. Ma Yunfeng (technical): Hebei Supply and Marketing School
207. Wang Hongda (technical): Hebei Academy of Judiciary
208. Zhang Chunbao (technical): Hebei Academy for Correctional Police
209. Miao Yanlong (technical): Hebei College of Metallurgy
210. Liu Yanru (technical): Hebei College of Metallurgy
211. Xian Guoru (technical): Shaanxi College of Metallurgy
212. Lü Xuemei (technical): Hebei Supply and Marketing School
213. Wang Zongjun (technical): Hebei Supply and Marketing School
214. Liu Han (technical): Hebei Industrial Management College at Qinghuangdao
215. Huang Zecheng (technical): Hebei People's Police Academy
216. Yang Yue (technical): Hebei People's Police Academy
217. Tian Chunfeng (technical): Hebei People's Police Academy
218. Gou Lihua (technical): Hebei People's Police Academy
219. Li Zhiyong (technical): Hebei People's Police Academy
220. Zhang Lei (technical): Hebei People's Police Academy
221. Yu Jingchun (technical): Hebei Chemical and Pharmaceutical College
222. Liu Yongli (technical): Hebei Chemical and Pharmaceutical College

If education is viewed as a factory to train people, then we can see from the proceeding lists that this is mainly what Fengning County's education system has produced for the past two years. Because counties attach vital importance to their higher education admissions list, I didn't tire of the two lists reproduced in this book. They measure educational success in the county's education, and Fengning Hope Elementary School and all other elementary and junior secondary schools in the county and all the students' parents make their primary target to contribute to this list. Therefore this list dual function: It compiles information on education and training, and parents use it to choose a good school. Through this list, Fengning County expects to achieve special population movements in its rural areas: As people from villages and towns spread to cities, people at lower levels of society move up. What is more, it is only through this list of specific institutions and professions that we can have any real understanding of the poor mountain children who achieve their positions through education; can the situation of the county with villages as the mainstay in contributing talented persons to the country, cities, and industrial systems be grasped accurately; and can we thoroughly understand, with performance as the criterion, the condition and significance of Fengning's educational system and how it works. The main purpose of primary and secondary education is to pass the higher education entrance examination, and outside those who do, the vast majority of the educated are eliminated. The chosen will become urbanites and enter the urban system, and the eliminated will remain in the countryside peasants who are useless because the education they received in no way prepared them for present-day rural life, and their desire and ability to study mistuned them with present-day rural life. The losers' plight and the success of

the chosen stem from the same kind of education and education-oriented strategy, which is discussed in more detail below.

Now let us take a look at the organization and living conditions of Fengning County Number One Secondary School as the final link in producing talent and as the main frontier of educational competition. In Fengning's three normal senior secondary schools, Number One boasts the vast majority of those who are chosen for higher education in the entrance examinations. Each year Fengshan Senior Secondary School has 10 students who pass *gaokao*, and 40–50 who can "move forward." Zhailing Senior Secondary School has about 1 or 2 a year, and according to Liu Yuquan, sometimes none passes *gaokao*, and 10 can "move forward." You can see that the amount of students who advance to higher education at these two senior secondary schools dwarf in comparison to a big year at Number One. Regarding this comparison, Liu Yuquan, who served as president and secretary for five years, said he felt little pride because Number One Secondary School receives many key policy-based guarantees: Number One admits the students with the highest scores, so "it has a better source of students than other schools." Also, the county's priority is to ensure that Number One Secondary School has the best teachers, and the county's education bureau will transfer successful teachers from other schools to Number One, "these conditions have no comparison." It is also difficult to compare the economic security that comes with being a teacher at Number One to other schools and even work units, and this too helps concentrate talent at Number One. Under pressure by Number One, Fengning and Zhailing senior secondary schools do their utmost to increase their enrollment rates. In 1993, all the very best science examinee for the higher education entrance examination in the city of Chengde came from Zhailing Secondary School, which in the words of Fengning people "produced an unexpected winner." However, since the school and examinees did not realize they did so well on the examination, none of them made it to the best schools, even though they did do well on the examination. How a school helps its students make the best choice of universities is also an indication of how good that school is. A good school is confident and informed in this regard; they have broader outlooks, more comprehensive information and a wealth of experience. This ability they have to produce groups of students for prestigious universities is something a school that occasionally produces a top student does not have.

Number One is a well-qualified school that enjoys preferential policies and has excellent performance, but all these good things exert great pressure on the school. For Number One, a decline in the higher education entrance examination scores one year would upset the government, society and parents, and the school's secretary and president are aware that they are to blame if things go bad. In such a fierce, brutal competition, extraordinary measures are needed to remain outstanding. Number One Secondary School in Fengning runs its school strictly. Ordinarily boarders are not allowed out of school except on Sunday afternoon for a walk. Non-resident students must have a red card issued by the school before they can leave the premises. Romantic relationships are strictly prohibited. The

school believes affection at school will seriously affect learning, so the rules "you are not allowed to have a boyfriend or girlfriend" and "do not fight" are tied to the school's strict regulations. Those who violate either of these two rules are expelled immediately. When students enroll in senior secondary school grade one, both parents and students must agree to and sign a responsibility statement. The tripartite responsibilities of students and the obligations which they are under at school are very detailed, and include this striking item: "Those who get into fights or fall into love will be expelled immediately." For those who violate the regulations, the school immediately calls their parents to come get them. During the five years Liu Yuquan served as president and secretary four students were expelled for having romantic relationships. On one occasion two students self-studying at night returned to an empty dormitory together after lights out and jammed the door shut. The person who oversaw the dormitories discovered the incident. Liu Yuquan: "The school did not lecture them. It knew that the two students were engaged in a romantic relationship and sent them home." Liu Yuquan said one of the two students had transferred from a school in Xinglong County, and the other was a local resident and the child of a village Party branch secretary. This incident has had a big impact on the school. Though students do not know the specific circumstances of that matter, they do know it involved a romantic relationship, and the way it was handled keeps others from having romantic relationships. Liu Yuquan said: "Of course some fall in love secretly and there is nothing we can do about that, but nobody dares to be too openly affectionate at school. But it is hard to deal with this problem because it can be difficult to distinguish relationships. You cannot impose restrictions on the normal lives of male and female students, and you cannot say anything to the students who come to and leave from school together on a daily basis. You do not want to hurt their studies by lowering their self-esteem. But they will be expelled if it is determined that there is a romantic relationship." Liu Yuquan analyzes love mainly due to the impact it has on the community: First, divorces are on the rise and nobody cares for many of the children of divorced families. This makes them alone emotionally and "the problems grow from here." Second, too many things in this regard are reflected on television, "Some television series teach people how to fall in love, and even engage in love triangles." But the surrounding environment of Number One is even more complex, with its many places to watch videos, play videogames and play billiards. Liu Yuquan believes that in contrast television is better, "The videos they watch are of little value and are nothing healthy. We often go to the video halls to check for our students, but the managers always fight with us because we hurt their business." It seems the teachers at Number One really do spare no effort in keeping their students from being distracted in this regard. The school not only checks for its students at the video halls but also at the movie theater. Every Saturday the county's movie theater schedules a midnight movie, and this also worries the school. Liu Yuquan: "There are few people at midnight movies and the lighting is very dark, so it is easy to have problems." Every Saturday at 11:00 p.m. the school sends teachers to go to the movie theater to check for students, and of course they inevitably get

into altercations with the managers there too. Besides from love, the school also deals seriously with student fights, and each semester 2–3 students are expelled for fighting. These are disciplinary measures, but Liu Yuquan told me they also have positive measures, one of which is expanding the Party membership. Each year the school has 10–20 students join the Party. This year 16 students were recruited, and they have already been approved by the Party Committee of the Education Bureau.

It appears that these disciplinary actions are a bit heartless, and for those who do hold the view of humanistic education they are unacceptable and unforgivable. But Fengning Number One has no choice. It is in the leading position in the higher education entrance examinations in rural areas, and there is no good way around such stringent law. The treatise "Emile: Or Treatise on Education" has abundant resources in support of humanistic education, but poor places such as Fengning cannot afford to support these economic and cultural resources. The higher education entrance examination is actually a rural-urban competition, but rural places inevitably have to pay some price for humanity since poor rural areas lack resources and there is strong competition for resources with cities. This centralized management system and this policy-style approach to checking dormitories and video halls are not allowed outside the school, but the school has to do this in order to produce highly effective students. In the fiercely competitive higher education entrance examinations in urban and rural areas, the pattern in disadvantaged secondary schools run by counties is not to tolerate too much romanticism. This is something Liu Yuquan is very clear about. He is more willing to see education as a type of industry, whereas the parents who spend money to send their children to school see education as a type of investment. He believes the poorer a place is the more people are willing to invest in education. One reason for this is that poor people have little money to spare and a family with savings of ten thousand or close to ten thousand *yuan* is considered well-off. While ten thousand or close to ten thousand is too small to invest elsewhere, it is perfect for investing in a child's education. A student at Fengning Number One Secondary School pays about 15,000 *yuan* for three years, and even well-off families must borrow to cover the costs. The other reason is that in poverty-stricken areas industries other than education cannot develop, factories do not make money, and there is else nothing to invest in; a university student will change a family's economic condition and social status rather substantially. Liu Yuquan said a large number of students from Fengning who went on to university make good money, hold alumni gatherings at the school, and commute to work in Chengde or Beijing by car. I asked Liu Yuquan whether the poor job market in recent years has affected local parents' enthusiasm toward investment in education. Liu Yuquan said that, to the contrary, it has stimulated their enthusiasm to make the investment, because it is mainly difficult for graduates of secondary specialized schools and common institutions to find employment. The prospects for graduates from key institutions are still very wide, so parents want their children to be admitted to good schools, especially key universities. Therefore investment has increased. Over the years in Fengning County, there have been about 400 secondary specialized students who had to move back home after graduation, and the lesson provided to parents by

this situation is not to let their children go to secondary specialized schools, especially those for junior secondary school graduates, and send their children to senior secondary schools so that they can score good on the higher education entrance examination and go to university. This is exactly what Liu Yuquan said when talking about the so-called fever to attend senior secondary schools. A few years ago in the county, secondary specialized graduates were still popular and could find decent work, and graduates of financial and agricultural schools worked as office workers and technicians in the township. After they worked long enough, according to Liu Yuquan, they could end up becoming a deputy mayor of the township. At the time farmers had a saying: "The school does not matter as long as they are experts and not farmers." Not so anymore. For the past two years, students with good scores in Fengning County have been reluctant to apply for specialized secondary schools. Last year the scores of students admitted to Chengde Agricultural School were lower than those of the self-paying students admitted to Fengning Number One, although graduates from the agricultural school can obtain an urban *hukou* and become national cadres, and life after senior secondary school is a much more risky in comparison.

The president of Fengning Number One and the school's teachers all know that parents' money in poor areas is hard-earned, so their goal is relatively realistic: Get the students through the higher education entrance examination so that they can "cross the higher plane of education" or "move forward." This issue also involves the on-going promotion of quality education. Although quality education is promoted, the pressure on students and schools to enter a higher grade school cannot be lessened. The students at Fengning Number One also know that education is second to entering a higher grade school. So while "quality education" still has an impact on education in primary and junior secondary schools, it is not all that important in the higher education entrance examination in senior secondary schools. Liu Yuquan also sees quality education realistically. He believes that the implementation of quality education in senior secondary school is mainly for giving those who cannot enter university an outlet; for example, students in music, painting, sports and tech who will need to find work in the future. He said: "People are not all alike; you must open up different paths so the students have an outlet." In his opinion, senior secondary school is mainly a place for students to solve the employment problem and to give "students an outlet." Entering a higher grade school is a job like any other.

Parents of students from poor areas who have invested everything in their children place their hope on Liu Yuquan, leader of Fengning County Senior Secondary School, so he what he thinks can be reasonable. In recent years, discussions on education has focused on the urban middle class (mainly intellectuals), and it is rare to hear the views of county school principals and rural parents. Educated urbanites are always complaining that the burden on secondary and junior secondary students is too heavy, that teaching is too monotonous, and that the style of the higher education entrance examination is too rigid, which to educated urbanites and cities is true. However, the context of rural areas is different. Few rural students and parents complain about the burden of learning, and rural students must

work harder to get the same test scores as urban students. Also, the score-line for students in large cities than for students in rural areas, which means rural students aiming for university must actually get higher test scores than urban students. You can imagine the burden, but they are not complaining about it. When parents and students of Fengning County Number One agree to the school's harsh management and discipline, they gladly accept the terms and conditions of this management so that the students can enter the school. For them, so-called "comprehensive development" is nothing but a luxury. For instance, educated urbanites frequently criticize the rigidness of the higher education entrance examination which, if viewed from the perspective of cities, is right on mark because this rigid exam style cannot bring the fineness of the students' broad horizons, wide knowledge and extensive reading into full play. Wang Li, a former substitute teacher who taught science at Beijing Number One, made the first attempt at bringing this problem to light. In the back of class one's unit two language textbook was a writing exercise that asked students to break up into small groups and choose one appropriate question, formulate an interview outline, and interview a school leader, league cadre or teacher. "I questioned the inflexibility. I thought it would be good to expand the interview to people outside the school so that the students themselves could choose who to interview and make it a social interview.[1]" The students warmed to my idea immediately. Their enthusiasm was unprecedented, and the very strong organizational and activity skills of Beijing's worldly-wise children were brought into full play. The students took advantage of the favorable condition of Beijing as China's cultural capital, and in just two weeks of after class activities, two classes comprising more than 80 student groups or individual students interviewed different social classes, more than ten kinds of occupations, and nearly 100 people. Interviews involved managers of state-owned enterprises and banks, national gymnastics team coaches, ball-game stars and the wealthy. They also involved people of low social status, such as laid-off women workers, migrant workers, nannies, old men selling newspapers and disabled persons, and even subway beggars, cancer patients, relatives of drug addicts and children from divorced families.[2]" This is how Wang Li described her feeling at the time: "I was tempted to tell the children: Now this is composition![3]" But if this is composition, then rural children are out of luck; they simply cannot meet so many people. Without the vibrancy of city life, it is very difficult to write such rich and colorful articles. If the higher education entrance examination made the essays written by Wang Li's students the standard, then examinees in Fengning County would have very few outlets. Let's say this year's higher education entrance examination asked students to explain whether memories can be transplanted. This alone would give urban students an advantage over rural students because unlike urban examinees, rural examinees do not have access to that kind of information, but urban students

[1]Wang (1998), pp. 20–21.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

have abundant imaginative materials. Of course it is certainly a commendable thing for the higher education entrance examination to break from this out-of-date method of assigning a topic and give examinees freedom of imagination, but it has also divested the many legitimate interests of rural examinees. Economic and cultural resources in rural areas are very limited, and the knowledge rural schools can pass on to their students is limited to textbooks, so it is already very difficult for rural students to get good grades in the rigid examination. If the examination was to again break from established ways, rural examinees would be even worse off. Of course one function of education is to train talented persons, but they must select people with talent too. High-quality education is needed to train talented students, but so is fairness to poor students. In the past serious dividing differences existed in the city and countryside, and this made the dual principle of how to balance the two functions of education in a way that was both effective and fair worthy of serious consideration.

Fengning Number One is run based on the resources a county secondary school has or can mobilize. Starting in grade two the school begins dividing students according to their ability in arts or sciences, but focuses on science education because traditionally this has always been the school's strong suit. Science classes are divided into key and regular classes, and the school focuses on strengthening the teaching staff in the three key classes. This year, under the influence of various factors, the key class system was cancelled; however, this system had played a very important role in the higher education entrance examination over the years. In the higher education entrance examinations, Fengning Number One has always stood out in science. Out of the 280 successful examinees in 1997, 60 of them were liberal arts students, only 21 %. That same year 156 undergraduate students were admitted to university and 30 of them, or just 19 %, were liberal arts students, an even smaller proportion. Out of the 223 successful examinees in 1998, 62 of them were liberal arts students, or 27.8 %, an increased proportion. But out of this year's 126 undergraduates only 25 of them were liberal arts students, making up a similar proportion to that of 1997 at 19.8 %. Excellence in science is what distinguishes Fengning Number One, and over the years all of Chengde's best science examinee have been linked to Fengning. Kuancheng Manchu Ethnic Autonomous County, another county of Chengde City, is known for its liberal arts. Its number one secondary school has produced a number of liberal arts scholars, and its key classes focus on the liberal arts making the school just as interesting as Fengning.

Looking at the sex ratio of Fengning Number One, we see that girls account for 40 %. Their numbers in university are relational to their numbers as successful examinees, 40 %, and relative to the number of girls studying at Number One. Nevertheless, at some point they often outperform boys; for instance, all the students admitted to Peking University and Tsinghua University in 1997 and 1998 were girls, and all of them are the children of teachers. It is a common phenomenon in rural areas for the children of teachers to earn good grades. Since there is no buildup of ordinary social culture in rural places, it is obvious that teachers' families enjoy helpful knowledge in private. About half of the students at Fengning Number One

are from junior secondary schools located in the county seat—Fengning Number Two and Number Three, and the other half came from villages under the county's administrative center. However, not all students at Number Two and Number Three are from the county. Many affluent families in villages under the county's administrative center pay the high price of attendance, and even rent houses in the county seat, so that their children can go to the junior secondary schools there for the reason that a high proportion of students from Number Two and Number Three junior secondary schools are admitted to Number One Secondary School. In the lists of names from Number One's higher education entrance examination lists, there were more successful examinees from families in rural areas than there were from the county seat, mainly because those students are more willing to endure hardship. Most rural children who attend Number One live at the school. Compared to commuter students, this affords them more time to study and more opportunities to communicate. Fengning Number One is more like a home for non-county seat children.

Even though Fengning Number One scores well in the higher education entrance examinations, the president of the school still feels a sense of crisis. Staff sees uncertainty for themselves because of possible future changes to education and to the higher education entrance examination, germinating the belief that "their school should be raised to a higher level." To raise a school to a higher level, there must be more qualified teachers. Liu Yuquan advocates for "scientific research schools," and strongly encourages teachers to embrace scientific research. In the past, schools did not encourage individual research because they feared it would affect teaching. But Liu Yuquan says, "If you do not encourage the teachers students to develop an interest in research, then they will find excitement elsewhere and not necessarily in education, so you might as well encourage them to engage in scientific research." Liu Yuquan thinks it is important to read a lot of books to write papers and that teachers can only improve if they study books. He thinks those who do not are just pedagogues, not education experts. Two years ago he began to advocate "scientific research schools," and to today it has been gradually accepted by people. Number One's chemistry group is a very strong follower of the idea. In one year, one of its teachers published 10 papers in journals above the provincial level, and the group as a whole has 20 publications. At the school there are 10–20 teachers who have what it takes to publish articles in outside journals, though Liu Yuquan thinks the number is even less. He said the school encourages these leaders to guide the teachers in publishing papers. Regardless of the practical motivation behind Fengning Number One's support for "scientific research schools," its objective of promoting this mechanism for cultivating talent at Fengning Number One has made the school a scientific and cultural center in the community. And regardless of the effect this campaign is actually having in the community, it is gratifying to know that at least the direction is healthy.

Graduating from senior secondary school is a turning point in life. Those who are admitted to universities and technical schools are dazed but full of desire to "move forward" and begin their new lives; on the other hand, those who are unsuccessful in the entrance examination do not want to go back to their old environments. Rural students who do not get into university must retain their original

rural *hukou* and identity and return to their villages and their land. Still, deep down inside these senior secondary students are reluctant to go back. They yearn for knowledge and urban life and possess a strong desire and the basic skills for city life, and this makes returning to their home villages tantamount to mental torture. Nowadays, compared to the later period of the Cultural Revolution, there are far fewer senior secondary school graduates in Fengning. During the Cultural Revolution, Fengning County implemented the school policy that there would be elementary schools for every production team, junior secondary schools for every village, and senior secondary schools for every commune or township and senior secondary schools would be made universal. Back then there weren't strict requirements on learning, so nobody cared whether graduates of senior secondary school were qualified as such. Those who graduated from senior secondary school returned to their home villages. First, it felt fair because everyone could attend senior secondary school. Second, since it was impermissible to test into university back then and one had to live like a farmer for two years before being recommended for university, there was no pressure to "move forward." Third, at the time there were strict barriers between urban and rural areas and a rigid *hukou* system, and the rural population had no need or opportunity to go to the cities in large numbers, so it was natural and normal for senior secondary school students to go back to their home villages after graduation. Sun Yazhong, who presently holds the post of Humaying Village branch secretary, went back to his home village after graduating from senior secondary school in the later period of the Cultural Revolution. He said he does not feel he wasted his talents. After returning to their homes, these people really did play roles in their native villages. Sun Yazhong said there are now several key cadres in the village who graduated from senior secondary school during the Cultural Revolution.

Because schools were scaled back after the Cultural Revolution only three normal senior secondary schools were left in the county, and this made it uncommon for someone to go on to school. Nowadays going to senior secondary school is nothing like it was in the past. Now you must spend a lot of money. More than ten thousand *yuan* for three years of schooling is a heavy burden for a peasant family. With regard to their children, there are two things Fengning County farmers must save for: their children's weddings and their children's studies. The parents must build a house, send betrothal gifts and hold a wedding when their children marry, and must struggle to afford their children the opportunity to graduate from senior secondary school. "A child's study and marriage are the burden of parents," Gu Xianting said. Students who do not make it to university waste the family investment, and upon returning home lose honor among family and neighbors. Gu Xianting told me a story about a senior school graduate from the village of Mr. Zhang, a deputy dean of the township school. Shortly after the graduate returned to his village, het went mad and would break into Mr. Zhang's grocery store, leaving Zhang very distressed. I remember a similar plot in a novel from the later period of the Cultural Revolution denouncing the 17-year-old education system, but I never thought it would actually happen.

In the end, however, the larger social context is all said and done. It is very rare nowadays in rural Fengning for a senior secondary school graduate to be at home ill. Instead those people are out looking for opportunities other than agriculture, such as studying how to make cut outs and opening tailor shops or raising money to buy used vehicles for transport, but most simply give up and work in neighboring cities such as Beijing and Tianjin. In rural Fengning most of the village's young migrant workers have a senior or junior secondary school education and most of those farming their land are elderly. Chen Ying, president of the Humaying Township Adult Education School, told me that young people in the village go out in search of work and account for 50–60 % of the rural labor force. Humaying Village branch secretary Sun Yazhong said that his village has a population of 1200 and approximately 120 people work outside the village and that "there are very few young people at home." Many of them work in Beijing, mainly in the construction industry. Many villages have small contractors in Beijing-based construction companies who recruit young people to work in the city. "A lot of migrants suffer," Sun Yazhong said. That is they do hard labor. Still it is significant to earn wages like this. In Beijing workers from Fengning engage in construction. Bricklayers can earn up to 1000 *yuan* or so per month, and unskilled laborers can earn 400 or 500 *yuan* a month, which is the same as university and technical school graduates who return to their home villages to work as cadres.

The ones who genuinely return home to gain a foothold and take root in one's home village are those who graduated from universities and technical schools. The reason they are willing to return to their home villages is because they have acquired wealth and position; are national cadres and have urban *hukou's*; and have become the upper layer and ruling elite of the township community. Each year more than 300 people from Fengning County receive high enough test scores to enter universities, and nearly 200 go to technical schools. After graduation all the technical school graduates return to the county and most of them want to work in the township, but only those few with solid connections can stay in the county. In recent years technical school graduates in the county have been unable to find work, and right now more than 400 of them are at home unemployed. In the one position that was available in Humaying Village last year, it was just this year that the person who returned home after graduation got the position. The fact that it was arranged, in and of itself, is pretty good. Graduates at or above the junior college level can find work in the county, but there are pros and cons and wages are not guaranteed. The Fengning County Personnel Bureau has provided me the following information about the work assigned for university graduates in the county since 1994 (see Table 5.1).

Being assigned to work in the county is not to say these people stayed in the county. The figure includes those who were sent to county institutions located in townships or towns or assigned to enterprises they owned. In fact, most were assigned to work there, so they were actually assigned to townships or towns. This is like the situation of teacher Bao Shuxia at Hope elementary school. She was nominally assigned to the County Animal Husbandry Bureau; but in fact, she is stationed at the township's veterinary under the bureau. County provisions for

university graduates guarantee them a place in the county seat if they return to the county after graduation, but this may not be true graduates from special training colleges. It is very difficult for university graduates in the county seat to apply to their job what they learned in university because it is impossible for Fengning County's industrial structure to provide the same professional settings of universities, and many science majors have to do administrative work. There is only one large enterprise in Fengning with considerable profits; that is Nine Dragons Liquor Distillery and it produces the Nine Dragons Liquor. This liquor is well-known locally, and generations of Chengde people are familiar with it. The distillery also produces a beverage called Little White Birch, which is a natural drink made from the sap of birch trees. While not very popular, it is well liked by drinkers and maintains a certain sales level. As one might imagine, this kind of distillery has no use for the professional knowledge of someone who enters higher education from a number one secondary school. Basically there is no appropriate enterprise available for university graduates who go back to Fengning. Work here does not correspond to fields of study and wages and even the work itself are not assured, so many returning graduates slowly leave the county system and become idlers in the public sector. People like Bao Shuxia who go to Beijing and make a living away from home are not uncommon. Undergraduate students in Fengning County who are good enough to move to key and respectable universities will not return to the county. Some of them will find formal work in major cities or developed areas of the South; others will find a way to create files with talent exchange centers in major cities and will find work wherever they reside. Mr. Han, secretary of the Fengning County Education Bureau, is a gentle education official who would complain to me about major cities and developed areas are looting talented people from poor mountainous areas like Fengning. Fengning County uses half of its annual fiscal revenue on education, but trained top talent move on to major cities and developed areas of the South and Fengning gets nothing in return for the loss. He believes that major cities and developed areas of the South should reward poverty-stricken areas for supplying large numbers of talent, or that costs and benefits should be balanced by the state through a special tax, so as to mobilize the enthusiasm of the schools in poor areas to supply more talent and bring benefit to more cities and developed areas. He said this year's funds for implementing the third phase of establishing universal nine-year compulsory education has already been allocated, and this extremely limited money has already played a big role in producing tangible results. Secretary Han's view is very reasonable, but he overlooked two things. First, major cities and developed areas actually have a problem of excess talent. China's current economic development from an overall perspective cannot accommodate so many Chinese university graduates, and even students from key universities should expect some snags in looking for work. The actual situation is not like what Secretary of Fengning Number One Liu Yuquan described to me: "Students from key universities enter the workforce when they are juniors." If that was the case, then it would be a favor done to poverty-stricken areas if their students are placed in major cities and developed areas, so compensation for these poor areas are out of the question. Second, students from key universities who

Table 5.1 University graduates in the county

Year	Total people	Assigned to county	Assigned to townships or towns
1994	127	126	1
1995	80	78	2
1996	79	70	9
1997	120	118	2
1998	129	125	4

return to Fengning County are useless. It is not true that Fengning needs them back, but they say no. The truth is that the county doesn't have the demand for them, so it would be hypocritical to claim brain drain. This is the dilemma facing the education industry. Its curriculum is determined by the objective to train and send talent to major cities and large industries, a kind of dedication that is absolutely selfless and wholeheartedly devoted to others. This flow of talent benefits individual university students and their families the most, rather than develop their hometowns. However, this problem wasn't taken to heart by Humaying Village branch secretary Sun Yazhong. He believes local talents greatly benefit their hometown if they work other areas and in important government offices: "At least when they get to that work unit, that good place to work, it is more convenient for people from their home village to handle their affairs they. Without their help in for example Beijing, you would find it hard to go to where you went, and you are nobody!" Sun Yazhong feels badly that too few talents leave the village. He said that ever since the liberation there has been no one who works outside the county. Before the liberation the village had a Kuomintang commander, and the greatest person to come from the village after the liberation is the county police chief. A few years ago the son of Mr. Yu, the old village chief, studied in Shijiazhuang. He was a higher achiever and had already settled in Shijiazhuang; but in the end, he was replaced by someone with family connections. He went back to Fengning and is now a secretary in the County Electric Power Bureau. Sun Yazhong remains regretful when speaking about this matter. He said the village elders think the village cannot produce powerful figures and persons of talent because of *feng shui*. They think the west of the village is inhibited by the mountain, and that things will be better for them if the whole village moves under the eastern mountain. I tried to comfort him by saying that nowadays Fengning Hope Elementary School is being run well, and that maybe in the future the school will produce a powerful figure. When I mentioned Hope elementary school, Sun Yazhong became excited, and he said the village gave another 25,000 *yuan* to elementary school's universal nine-year compulsory education fund to buy instruments and tables for experiments. This response had been confirmed by Wang Suyun, the school's president. Wang Suyun said that Sun Yazhong is very supportive of the elementary school and is the go-to-person for things related to it. Sun Yazhong said Hope elementary school is better than the old village school. Back then it was a win just to find a carpenter to repair broken tables and chairs, but now new ones are purchased. The village secretary is not worried about local investments coming to naught because of brain drain.

Since the current education system looks toward cities and industries, Fengning's students—from universities and technical schools to senior and junior secondary schools—are all positioned to enter the big cities to live and work. It goes without saying that the Fengning college students stay in major cities and developed areas, but those from senior and junior secondary schools simply do not have the qualifications necessary to obtain formal entry into the cities. This completes the spontaneous flow from rural to urban areas, but they will occupy the outskirts of city areas and the lower tier of society, and they cannot replace the real city people who also do not want to be replaced. The knowledge they learned from their rural schools will help them in the cities, but the position they will occupy in the county's urban and industrial systems is actually quite rustic. But they will have urban *hukou's* and be national cadres, though they are not doing what they have learned in university and their work units are not doing well. Those who are in an awkward predicament are graduates from universities and technical schools who return to their home counties without arrangements, or with those who are unwaged, which is actually the same as not having any arrangement. These people are in a state of limbo and lack support, and become a burden on rural society. They don't feel assured as those who work. Even if they return to the cities to make a living away from home, unlike the graduates from senior and junior secondary schools who do not hesitate to move from place to place in search of work and form the core of bottom-layer workers, most of them will be like Bao Shuxia; that is, their arrangements will undergo a fundamental change as time goes on. These people are a new energy gathering before the community in Fengning Village, and their future is very uncertain. I met such a person in Humaying Village, and my conversation with him made me realize the difficulties and hopes contained in this issue.

His name is Huai Mingxue. During my investigation at Fengning Elementary School I wanted to print copies of my questionnaire to give to the students, and a general merchandise store owner pointed me to a nearby print shop. By the time I found the print shop it had closed, and nobody answered my knocks on the door and window. The woman at the foodstuff store next door came out to inquire about the situation. With her head pressed against the window to see inside the shop she said the shop owner's motorcycle was visible so he must be close by. After half an hour I returned to have another look, and sure enough someone was inside. His nametag said Huai, and he was called Huai Mingxue. He looked like he was in his twenties and he spoke hurriedly and his eyes moved about freely. He promised he would do what I wanted him to do, but complained about how it was Saturday and he could not rest because he had planned to return from his work unit to his hometown for the weekend. Since he advertised as a print shop, I wondered why he was doing other work. He said his main job is to manage two nearby iron ores, and that he works at the print shop because he is interested in type and to "have fun," and said he does not rely on it to make a living. You could hear in his tone that he was afraid others would look down on him because he opened a print shop, but he was very professional in reaching a deal on printing costs. I later asked some village cadres if they are somewhat familiar with him, and they said he was a so-called

temporary part-time iron ore manager. The next evening he delivered the printed questionnaires to my residence at the township school and it was just then that a row of houses lost power and the lights did not come back on. As we talked in the darkness I came to understand his experience.

Mr. Huai graduated from Fengning Number One Secondary School and at that time was admitted to a technical school, the Chengde Agricultural School. After graduation he returned to the county and moved to the grasslands of a township. There he worked at a reservoir, but he refused to work with them on the ground he would not be to apply there what he had learned in technical school. He said he later engaged in politics and nearly worked in the grassland's township government, but the area was poor and the work he did there was unwaged, so he angrily went back to his hometown Humaying. In Humaying he mainly did temporary work for a living, once as an unskilled laborer in the township. Now he does part-time iron ore work, but not every day. The print shop is also a source of income for him and is not just for "fun." He typically works for the township government, elementary schools and work units under the township government and helps people produce small advertisements. He has a relatively new computer, which is rare here. He said his computer can network, but he has yet to set up a phone line and install a modem. His print shop occupies a three-room building facing the street that was newly-built for commercial purposes, and he also has a building in a residential area of Beidaochi Village, where he is from. He has a motorcycle, which is to say he is well-off, and his status is higher than that of ordinary farmers. In Humaying elite people at the middle and lower levels of society all ride motorcycles, like the headmaster of Fengning Elementary School. The president of the township school, school administers, the president of the Adult School, and preschool supervisors all own motorcycles. The township Party secretary and the township head have Jeeps, and regular staff ride bicycles. Mr. Huai belongs to the motorcycle class, or that is he considers himself one of them. I say this because he does not have the stable position of those at the forefront of the motorcycle class.

Mr. Huai is worried university and technical school students who, just like him, linger about in rural areas. He said he is waiting on funds to run a business, and will connect with former students who do not have work arrangements. Though some already have arrangements, he doesn't believe the future is bright to do administrative work in townships or towns. He feels the best way to do business in rural areas is to use the large number of barren mountains for industrial development, like the variety of fruits planted in the mountains enclosing Qian'an County. Although planting fruit trees is not a tradition and custom in this mountain area, Mr. Huai thinks he can make a difference in this regard and that the fruit trees can be used as the starting point for capital accumulation before more profitable industries are developed. Due to the current national policy to implement unified management for food, there is no way for private individuals to engage in food processing, and they have no choice but to target fruit trees. Fengning has mountains, rivers and mines, and is fairly rich in resources. Though uncertain, Mr. Huai is quite confident in Fengning's development prospects. He wants to use graduates from university and technical schools as well as from senior and junior secondary

schools to solve the problem of rural surplus labor, saying, “The cities are full, so surplus labor must be absorbed in the countryside.” At present, funding is the main difficultly. He wants to attract funds from Beijing and other big cities as startup capital, and thinks “investors should be given preferential policies.” Second is the policy environment. Since Fengning is poor, once a new business is up and running it will be hit by a slew of business taxes and people will call on you to give up. However, Mr. Huai believes that this can be changed over time. He especially admires Liuzhuang Village of Xinxiang County, Henan Province. He said Liuzhuang’s secretary, Shi Laihe, made a fortune and assured common prosperity by running the village like a company. He said: “Now that is socialism!” From this he lamented that the quality of Fenging’s rural cadres is too low and that there cannot be two village corporatizations without new ideas. He discussed an idea with me. That is, place unassigned college students in villages for two years of training and then send them to villages as Party branch secretaries. He thinks this will spur new ideas by replacing branch secretaries with college education national cadres. In any case, these students are of rural origin, so they can serve as branch secretaries. I asked him if people would be willing to do this. He said they would, but the key is to have a few successful models. Fengning has hundreds of villages that could employ college students and contribute to industrial development in rural areas. Be that as it may, Mr. Huai knows that this is just a vision, and that one’s own effort is required to make it real. He has many classmates and acquaintances in places including Beijing and Chengde that he believes can help him in the future implement this plan.

Regardless of how likely it would be to implement Huai Xueming’s plan, it is interesting that these “excess” former students who returned to their land of birth have already started concocting plans to use urbanization as a way to transform rural areas. It is not the urbanization or the industrialization of rural areas that naturally produces the need for these talents; rather it is because of these people that production comes about, and it is due to their needed presence that rural areas are urbanizing. Since existing levels of urbanization in rural areas cannot accommodate them, they want to expand the country’s level of urbanization to find shelter. Perhaps the initiation and promotion of China’s urbanization process in poor areas was originally due to the desire of these people to grow and spread, or perhaps the rural education system fostered this urban-orientated crowd of people and in this manner will be repaid. Most likely this is what the education system has not foreseen. Politically they will develop a manner and an appearance that is oppositional and nongovernmental, but unlike being added to the traditional system, they can only transform society’s old habits. Will they create an urban society in the countryside? Will they create a new class of rural land owners? The answers to these questions remain to be seen. But what is for certain is that there will be more and more of these people in rural society, and that they will accumulate ever more intense desire and energy that will find a way to be released and realized in rural society. If they succeed, it will be great construction. If they fail, it will be great destruction. They will be attempters who try to transplant urbanization in rural areas (uprooting, not creating)—in this way the existing rural education system

actually causes people in rural society to be excited and anxious about their uncertain prospects.

Whether we call it transplanting or creating, the focus is on the conflicts arising between the different ideas of rural education and the education system brought about by the transformation of traditional Chinese villages through urbanization and modernization in this century. China continuously looks for new ways to learn in the wake of the abolishment of the imperial examination in 1905. The main purpose of modern education is to generally strengthen the country by cultivating new talent; and the basic framework and structure of learning—based on the advanced science of Europe, America and Japan in the early republication period—is still followed today. The respective realities of urban and rural areas are not part of this school system, and rural education is integrated and homogenized with urban education. Although major changes were made to the content of education after the establishment of the People's Republic, the school system has been strengthened by China's implementation of the new industrial catch-up strategy. The current education system is still a continuation of this strategy. For the countryside, this implies that implementation is long term; and that rural urbanization and modernization are achieved by relocating its residents to and copying the development of existing cities and industries. It implies these things because the scheme to transform the rural school system is not clear-cut but merely logical. To be frank, the school system never took rural transformation and rural development into account. Its focus has always been on the development of the country's construction and on industry and commerce in the cities; rural areas are just a source of talent. The logic behind this system does not completely exclude the countryside. It entails using urban capital and according with the urban model to make new urban villages once the country and its cities' industry and commerce develop and mature. This is essentially an act of transplanting. There are clear signs pointing to this idea, and its prospects are known now because there is already a large number of intellectuals from the countryside who go to urban universities; and because the "left over" ones who cannot integrate in the cities return to their villages. They see the existing urban model as ideal but the reality they face is the existing reality of the countryside, and this confrontational co-occurrence will permeate the shift from rural areas to urban areas in the future.

In addition to the mainstream education system, there have always been ideas and experiments in education that advocate and pursue other types of rural education based on the actual life of rural areas and the actual need for targeted education, so that rural children can become qualified rural workers. There have always also been progressive modernizers opposed to making the city the goal of their education. The essence of these ideas and experiments is to carry forward and transform rural life and the birth of the modern countryside on the basis of existing rural and agricultural situations. These ideas and experiments once even occupied a favorable position. Now let us trace the history and philosophy of this non-mainstream trend to help us understand the present situation of education in Fengning, and even the entire Chinese countryside.

This trend began in the 1920s and was advocated by Tao Xingzhi, Yan Yangchu and other education experts. In 1926 Tao Xingzhi wrote an article entitled, "The Fundamental Transformation of Chinese Rural Education,"[4] in which he issued a declaratory proposition on rural education:

> Chinese rural education has gone down the wrong road! People are taught to leave the countryside and run toward the cities; eat but not grow rice; wear clothes but not grow cotton; and build homes but not afforest. They are taught to envy luxury and despise farming. They are taught to share benefits, but not to produce them. Farmers are taught to turn their children into bookworms. The rich are taught to become poor and the poor to become exceptionally poor; and the strong to become weak and the weak to become exceptionally weak. With no other options, comrades are forced to endure and find a way to make a living.
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> What is the way out? We must create flexible education that is fit for real rural life. We need to create flexible main schools based on real life and work in rural areas, turn these schools into flexible teacher-training institutions, and ensure that these institutions produce flexible teachers who will train flexible students or citizens. Flexible rural education must live in flexible rural teachers; and rural teachers must have farmers' skills, a scientific mind and the courage to transform society. Flexible rural education must live in flexible teaching methods which must integrate teaching, learning, and application. Teaching must be done in the way what makes learning easier; and learning must be done based on what is applicable. Learning is targeted at application, and teaching is done by giving consideration to how things should be learned. Flexible rural education must rely on the living environment, not lifeless books. Teachers must use the forces of the living environment to develop students' ability—living skills to conquer nature and transform society…the reason why Chinese rural education is not effective is because education and agriculture are parallel and indifferent to each other. Education is without agriculture, so education has become empty and is shared and consumed. Agriculture is without education, and has lost popular support. Good rural schools are aware that the trend of selecting seeds, fertilizing plants and preventing pests in scientific agriculture must rapidly be made the core mechanism in order for agriculture to have a base and a headquarters on which to extend. Thus, education and agriculture must first walk hand in hand. It is best for both to walk hand in hand, but this joint cooperation must be full and effective; even more so, education must also work with other great forces. If education and banks fully communicate, material gains above all else will end; if education and scientific institutions fully communicate, superstitions will be eradicated; if education and health authorities fully communicate, diseases will be prevented; and if education and highway engineering authorities fully communicate, highways will be improved. In short, rural schools are the only way China can transform the core of modern rural life.

Tao Xingzhi's idea is very clear. He thinks rural education should include some local things as teaching material to make rural development the standard, and should require the function of schools as a community institution to be added to the practice of transforming the countryside politically and economically. He thinks they should even become the guide and core of this practice. He experimented running his own school in the suburbs of Nanjing in Xiaozhuang Village which, according to him and his pupils, was very successful, even though it did not alter the prevailing mainstream education system. Still, his idea has inspired later generations of Chinese Communists; in particular, it had a big impact on

[4]Tao Xingzhi Study Association of China (1986), pp. 18–19.

Party leader Mao Zedong. After the CPC gained a steady foothold in Yan'an in the 1940s it began to extend mainstream academic critique and transformation to its bases. The piece, "General Education Reform in Counter-Japanese Base Areas"[5] in *Liberation Daily*, was highly critical and demonstrated an urgent need of transformation: "The strengths and weaknesses of so-called modern education based on its international context…it is the product of big cities and does not conform to the needs of rural areas (needless to say those that are sparsely populated such as Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia and Northwest Shanxi); but they are indisputable. We are in China, in democratic base areas, in a time of war, in the countryside; there is no way out if we borrow indiscriminately from this method. For instance, exactly what kinds of people do our primary and secondary schools educate? There are only four kinds. (1) The person who returns home to work after graduation, which is the purpose of so-called national education. But nowadays education is for entering a higher school and so returning home devalues one's elementary school education, and especially one's secondary school education. Going back home also makes one at odds with others. You cannot be a model worker, and the point in having gone to school is lost. (2) The person who works for the government, and does all kinds of work for the Party and government and for the army and people. But nowadays education is not for this and so knowledge and its application have become disjointed. The need for government staff is also limited. Once a certain number of government workers is reached they become an unnecessary financial burden and it becomes necessary to reduce the labor force. (3) The person who enters a higher school. But those primary school graduates who attend secondary schools have always been a minority, so it can be said that all of them rose in rank. But where do secondary school students go next to rise in rank? It is not impossible to run universities according to old ways, but the existing senior cadre schools are incompatible with secondary schools. (4) The person who only finishes elementary school. What way out do they have? They are the vagrants and loafers. This is not a joke, but a fact; and this shows that it is essential for general education to undergo major reform." The piece also expressed its understanding of the mainstream education system from an international context: "Because the old education system (the system established after the imperial college entrance examination was abolished and schools were set up) wanted to learn from foreign countries, studying abroad had become its soul, and almost all domestic students prepared to study abroad and the schools were modeled after those of foreign countries. This turned the education system on its head." Rural education is a replica of urban education, and urban education is a replica of foreign education: a dual transplant problem. The prescription put forth by that article was a strong medicine for necessary transformation: "Since the lives of bases and the masses are based on family and villages, our mass education, whether it is for children, adults or women, must always take into account families and villages, and the

[5]China Institute of Education Science Preparatory Office (1959), pp. 11–15.

practical knowledge needed in family life and rural life should become the main content or the entire content of education; and the forms of learning suitable for family life and rural life, from village schools and literacy groups to apprenticeships that pass on production techniques, should be part of life and replace the present standing of elementary schools." This is the same idea that Tao Xingzhi had on rural education, its essence of which is to achieve a self-sustained rural education and rural life cycle detached from the old-type city in order to end its subordinate position to the city.

The CPC in Yan'an held this educational thought, and it is strongly correlated to the ruling ideas of Mao Zedong. Mao Zedong in the early 1920s was very unhappy about foreign-style schools, and in the Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan, Mao Zedong took a very clear stance: "See how the peasants who hitherto detested the schools are today zealously setting up evening classes! They always disliked the 'foreign-style school.' In my student days, when I went back to the village and saw that the peasants were against the 'foreign-style school,' I, too, used to identify myself with the general run of 'foreign-style students and teachers' and stand up for it, feeling that the peasants were somehow wrong. It was not until 1925, when I lived in the countryside for six months and was already a Communist and had acquired the Marxist viewpoint, that I realized I had been wrong and the peasants right. The texts used in the rural elementary schools were entirely about urban things and unsuited to rural needs. Besides, the attitude of the elementary school teachers towards the peasants was very bad and, far from being helpful to the peasants, they became objects of dislike. Hence the peasants preferred the old-style schools ('Chinese classes,' as they called them) to the modern schools (which they called 'foreign classes') and the old-style teachers to the ones in the elementary schools."[6] Mao's idea is one of perseverance. The mainstream education system was established according to the Soviet model after the founding of the PRC. Mao Zedong loathed the Western-style education system, and he constantly criticized it. The education system remained ruined up to the Cultural Revolution when, under the slogans of "education revolution" and "open-door education," a new education system that "served proletarian politics and combined production and labor" was established. Things were restored to order after the Cultural Revolution, at which time the Western-style education system was negated and the Soviet-style mainstream education system could be fully restored. To this day the Soviet-style system has been followed and for 20 years now corrections have been made to it.

For nearly a century there has been a fierce competition between the mainstream education system and those who contest it, facts of which are blurred and hard to articulate, and so simple conclusions cannot be reached. The ideological trend of opposing the mainstream education system is a critical response to it, and the spirit and insight of this response affirm there is no reason for it. As any

[6]Mao (1991), pp. 39–40.

long-established mainstream education system is often unreasonably conservative, it tends to be divorced from the changing real life. Classical education in China has continued on for more than a millennium, and changes in European education are not much quicker than in China. “The Romans educated their children with Greek culture and education. During the Middle Ages in Europe monks and young children of nobility delved into useless methods of deduction passed on by ancient writings and Aristotle. Until the beginning of this century, education in industrial countries mainly focused on the literature of Israel, Greece and Rome since ancient agricultural civilization. Today, Western education still puts too much emphasis on academic content and does not teach children how to deal with work and family issues after entering society.”[7] For today’s Eastern backward third world countries there still exists a “foreign” problem in their education, in addition to ancient drawbacks; that is, students are being guided to study abroad, and this is what *Liberation Daily* had denounced in an article. In an interview with a British reporter about the Third World, Paul Harrison talked about the pain he felt: “In schools in Africa and Asia the overwhelming position in the classrooms is to teach English literature and French literature. The gap between the curriculum and real life is enormous, and it is disorientating and disappointing to the students. In 1968 I stayed in several secondary schools in Africa. In all of these schools the students were alienated because they were away from home. They had to wear shorts and shirts or other fancy clothes. They lived in a rural environment, where the difference in social groups is big. The teachers were overbearing, the discipline was strict, and they had to live in dormitories. The foreign language works of distant kingdoms’ poets the teachers used in class were hard for the students to grasp. ‘I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud,’ a class of children mechanically recited the verses of the poem by William Wordsworth, ‘When all at once I saw a crowd, /A host, of golden daffodils; /Beside the lake, beneath the trees, /Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.’ ‘Sir, may I ask what the daffodil is?’ A bold student asked. In response the teacher drew daffodils on the blackboard because no student had seen this flower before.”[8] This is really absurd. And here, as Harrison points to, in addition to the ancient and “foreign” dominance, there is a problem of urban education dominating rural schools.

Things only get worse. The general shortcomings mentioned above are just those of the mainstream education system. There is also the Soviet-style mainstream education system, which is for rigid political dogma indoctrination. After Soviet-style indoctrination was transmitted to the education system in China, it became even more rigid—really a type of layered misfortune. In 1953 while teaching a lesson, Soviet expert Alexander Pushkin sharply criticized the Chinese elementary school language textbook “Red Scarf” for lacking language and literature factors and being excessively ideological and political. He contended that Chinese teachers often turn language lessons into political lessons, and that this hinders the

[7]Paul (1984), pp. 367–371.

[8]Ibid.

development of language: "It cannot be said that teachers discuss many ideological and political aspects to carry out ideological and political education; if ideological and political education only means that the teachers repeatedly mention the term, then ideological and political education becomes artificial and fake. Some texts have a distinct sense of ideological and political education; there is nothing more for the teachers to teach and the language lessons only require a high degree of political thought."[9] Soviet experts believed that studying the Soviet Union in this went too far, and this makes one think that the Soviet-style mainstream education system is actually far removed from the life, reality and actual needs of China's people.

In the face of these mainstream schooling disadvantages we cannot cry out against them any more than Tao Xingzhi, Mao Zedong, *Liberation Daily*, and Paul Harrison did in this reasoning. Interestingly, there are striking similarities between their words and deeds. In 1931 Tao Xingzhi proposed burning books: "If another Qin Shi Huang burned every textbook, where would the world go? Big and small pedants would have no chance to read, and as a pedant leader had noted: 'Classes are temporarily suspended if there are no textbooks.' This means some would embark on ocean adventures, perhaps becoming the next Charles Darwin; some would sell newspapers on trains in order to do chemistry experiments, perhaps becoming the next Thomas Edison; some would take children to climb mountains for fun, perhaps becoming the next Anne Vallayer-Coster; and some would return home to pasture cattle, chop wood, catch fish, farm or reel silk and earn more for a few mouthfuls of rice. Consequently, there would be fewer bookworms who do nothing after meals, and there would be more workers, creators, and inventors, and this would perhaps be the contribution of the second Qin Shi Huang."[10] Thirty-five years after the Cultural Revolution, Chinese students really did burn books. In 1979 Paul Harrison said in his book that: "It is urgent that we educate the countryside in the broadest sense to carry out education in schools about things outside the school for all the different age groups. They want to master basic cultural knowledge and mathematical knowledge about everyday life. They need to know how to ensure nutrition and health, how to grow their families, and they need to know what their legal rights are, how to get those rights, how to organize cooperatives and unions, and how to make their land increase production and their workshops improve efficiency."[11] Thirty-five years ago these same words were printed in an editorial by *Liberation Daily*. This shows us that those who contest the mainstream education system face the same problems and also the obstinate downsides of the system.

But what makes this problem complex is that those who contest the mainstream education system often do not the eliminate problems, and sometimes they even add new ones. For example, the real intention during the cultural and education

[9]Quoted from Xie Xiangxian and Ni Wenjin: "Language Teaching: The Relationship between Chinese and Taoism," see Qu (1992), pp. 302–303.

[10]Tao Xingzhi Study Association of China (1986), pp. 73–74.

[11]Paul (1984), p. 374.

revolutions in the 1960s and 70s was not to eliminate the stereotyped writing and dogmatic meaning of Soviet-style education; in fact, Soviet-style education was really no more pigeonholed and dogmatic than education throughout the Cultural Revolution. But opposition and criticism generate new dogma and even become insurmountable dogma. What follows from trying to correct the problem of education being divorced from life and from actual needs in thought and in practice is always a kind of narrow cultural pragmatism; what is more, corrections become a great offensive and a form of destructive anti-intellectualism that seriously damage the accumulation of culture and heritage and production. For example, let's say all "useless" knowledge is harmful and should be discarded. If that was the case, then intellectuals would be the least knowledgeable people, because they cannot farm nor can they do manual work, and they cannot solve practical problems. After the Cultural Revolution, rural primary and secondary schools opened their doors to students, but it was politics and the skills of labor and production that became core subjects, not cultural studies.

Overall it seems the argument that we must master knowledge about rural areas and farming skills needed to begin creating modern education in rural areas is relatively absurd. The dominance of modern science and technology on the economy and life (including the rural economy and rural life) have made the self-production of rural modernization a stale passion, and the increasingly close integration of China and foreign countries and of urban and rural areas have made the self-cycle of independent rural talent an endeavor that is not necessary, nor possible. In this context, the practical skills for rural areas that advocate in the thoughts of Tao Xingzhi and Mao Zedong on education have been non-critical to rural development, but the knowledge that seems divorced from existing rural life will one day play a major role in the countryside. An overall improvement of a country's level of development, including its rural areas, depends on whether the literary attainments of all its citizens improve, but it is not practical to measure these literary attainments according to specific criteria. The excessive pursuit of practicality harms the accumulation and conservation of culture, thus endangering the survival of the nation's strength and its existence and greatly damaging the usefulness of education. In a certain sense, the blind pursuit of education and the practicality of education professionals is a kind of short-sighted suicide. Culture should play its "usefulness of useless" role in conjunction with the Buddhist wisdom that "not intentional is useful, and intentional is useless." We can see from the pattern of demand for contemporary economic and technical talent that the training of scientific and cultural elites is increasingly important, thus being awarded for excellence in education has become an important postwar experience for the economic take-off of many countries, but the training of scientific and cultural elites cannot be achieved by the simple rural education envisaged by Tao Xingzhi and Mao Zedong. Morally speaking, to consider issues such as equal access to education, rights for the rural population to participate in urban life and national life, and fairness of class mobility, it is advisable to introduce the mainstream education system in simply be achieved by local education alone.

At present, cities' intelligentsias are beginning a new round of criticism on the present situation of education. This criticism is directed at monotonous, rigid educational methods and the generalization of educational content. But if only this educational criticism would amend the mainstream education system rather than further destroy it. The separation of the content of rural education from real rural life does not mean it does not have the channel through which to interact and cycle with rural areas. As previously discussed, in fact, it has chosen to join in the rural transformation by shifting from the city to instead modernize in the countryside. Above I discussed how more and more university and technical school students are returning to the countryside, and a larger number of senior and junior secondary school graduates eventually return to the countryside after laboring in the cities. The mobilization of these rural people by education is bound to repay villages in a powerful way.

Primary school is where the education cycle begins. After the class schedule for the semester is final at Fengning Hope Elementary School, we can truly feel the tension and busyness of the rural elementary school, which stems from this no-free-time class schedule under the current mainstream education system. I noticed that the higher the grade the less activity classes there are, but the school still complains that there are too many of them, and before the semester ends each grade will lose one activity class and gain one reading class. For grades 1–5, the class schedules for Fengning Hope Elementary School are as follows:

Grade One

Week/ section	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Morning assembly	Morning assembly	Morning assembly	Morning assembly	Morning assembly
1	Political education	Math	Math	Math	Math
2	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese
3	Math	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese
4	Chinese	Natural sciences	Art	Weekly activity	Weekly activity
5	Weekly activity	Weekly activity	Science and technology	P.E. activity	In reserve
6	Cultural activity	P.E.	Music	P.E.	Art
7	Music	Activity	Activity	Reading	Team activity

Grade Two

Week/ section	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Morning assembly	Morning assembly	Morning assembly	Morning assembly	Morning assembly
1	Political education	Math	Math	Math	Math

2	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese
3	Math	Natural sciences	Math	Chinese	Chinese
4	Chinese	Music	Chinese	Art	Weekly activity
5	Art	P.E.	P.E.	Science activity	Music
6	Cultural activity	Weekly activity	P.E. activity	Chinese	In reserve
7	Team activity	Physical labor	Weekly activity	Weekly activity	Reading

Grade Three

Week/ section	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Morning assembly	Morning assembly	Morning assembly	Morning assembly	Morning assembly
1	Political education	Math	Math	Math	Math
2	Math	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese
3	Activity	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese
4	Chinese	Natural sciences	P.E.	Art	Math
5	In reserve	Music	Social sciences	Science activity	P.E. activity
6	Social sciences	Science and technology	Art	Music	Activity
7	Activity	Activity	Reading	Team activity	Physical labor

Grade Four

Week/ section	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Morning assembly	Morning assembly	Morning assembly	Morning assembly	Morning assembly
1	Political education	Math	Math	Math	Math
2	Math	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese
3	Music	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese
4	Activity	Natural sciences	Art	Natural sciences	P.E.
5	Chinese	Social sciences	Activity	Music	Social sciences
6	Science and technology	Activity	Science activity	Activity	Reading
7	In reserve	Art	P.E.	Team activity	Physical labor

Grade Five, Class One

Week/ section	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Morning assembly	Morning assembly	Morning assembly	Morning assembly	Morning assembly
1	Political education	Chinese	Math	Chinese	Math
2	Chinese	Math	Chinese	Math	Chinese
3	Math	Activity	Chinese	Chinese	Math
4	Chinese	Chinese	Local class	Activity	Music
5	P.E.	Activity	Social sciences	Natural sciences	Reading
6	Natural sciences	Music	Weekly activity	Activity	P.E.
7	Weekly activity	Physical labor	Art	Art	Team activity

Grade Five, Class Two

Week/ section	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Morning assembly	Morning assembly	Morning assembly	Morning assembly	Morning assembly
1	Political education	Math	Chinese	Math	Chinese
2	Math	Chinese	Math	Chinese	Math
3	Chinese	Chinese	Activity	Natural sciences	Chinese
4	Math	Activity	Social sciences	Chinese	Weekly activity
5	Music	Local class	Activity	Weekly activity	Reading
6	Art	P.E.	Chinese	P.E.	Music
7	Natural sciences	Activity	Physical labor	Team activity	Art

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Chapter 6
A Comparison

In my survey design I wanted to compare rural schools in different regions; for example, I wanted to compare economically developed areas to poor areas, metropolitan suburbs to remote mountainous areas, and core areas of Han settlement to ethnic minority areas. One way in which I did this was by comparing Yulong Hope Elementary School in Fuzidong Village, Nishan Township, Qufu City, Shandong, to Hope Elementary School in Fengning Manchu Ethnic Autonomous County, Hebei. The comparison between Fengning, a northern nomadic hometown and a hunting ground for station troops of past dynasties, to Fengning, a symbol of Chinese culture and the hometown of Confucius in Qufu, is interesting. However, the contrast both surprised and disappointed me a bit. In comparing contemporary Qufu culture with that of Fengning, I found no obvious signs of progress. Qufu did not show itself to be a place of great cultural tradition, and it has been unable to discover the greatness of the cultural knowledge it possess. Apart from the old family mansion and temple; the new tourist facilities that echo with the "Three Kong's" (Kong Family Mansion, Temple of Confucius, Cemetery of Confucius); the new broad streets and the magnificent government office/offices from lucrative tourism revenue; and of course the provincially-run and -managed Qufu Normal University, cultural speaking, Qufu is no different than many other counties in the north of China. You can't say it is better than other places, but it is certainly no worse than any other county or city in the country. Perhaps, after several decades of revolution and movements, places' cultural traditions and their traditional places have more or less been destroyed, and now we are all on the same starting line, a point at which everyone has no tradition or style and is therefore equal. But contemporary mainstream culture and the education system are completely new things, and thus are not very compatible with old cultural heritage. So, while old cultural traditions remain strong, their effectiveness as concepts and symbols are being undermined. In fact, in the new pattern of culture and education, cultural and educational differences between regions are mainly due to differences in

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economic strength, which leads to differences in cultural and educational investments. Qufu's economy, which is far better than Fengning's economy, is due to its tourism industry, but structurally it is still an agricultural county. By nature, Fengning is a poor agricultural county, but its officials and the public have a strong sense to engage education and to work harder the poorer a school is. Because of this Qufu's and Fengning's per capita investment in education are very similar. But the fact that both counties' Number One secondary schools have been erecting high-rise buildings since the 1990s shows that their rhythm of investments in education is broadly similar. Of course, the main building of Qufu's Number One covers more area than that of Fengning's Number One and has, among other things, a teaching building, a comprehensive office building, student dormitories, a comprehensive teaching building, a library, and a laboratory. This is because Qufu has nearly 600,000 students while Fengning only has 360,000, but this is also because Qufu's Number One is both a senior secondary school and a junior secondary school. Qufu's Number One has 46 classes, of which junior secondary has 18 classes, senior secondary has 24 classes and 4 repeater classes (Fengning people call these "continuation classes"); and a total of 3400 students who live on campus and 219 teachers for the entire school. Fengning's Number One is a senior secondary school only. It has 34 classes, 2200 on-campus students, and it is larger in scale than Qufu's Number One, but it has slightly fewer teaching staff at 172. Based on calculations of student numbers, Qufu Number One Secondary School's class capacity is slightly more than that of Fengning Number one Secondary School, and its 28 classes for senior secondary school students have fewer students than Fengning's 34 classes, but not by much. On the number and proportion of students admitted to university each year, we can see that these two secondary schools are relatively close. The president of Qufu Number One Secondary School, Chen Yiying, told me that his school sends more than 200 students, including undergraduate and vocational students, to university each year, accounting for 50 % of the total number of graduates, which is relatively close to the number and proportion of successful examinees of Fengning's Number One Secondary School. Most interesting is that these two secondary schools have 1–2 students pass the entrance examination for the so-called "top universities"; those being Peking University and Tsinghua University, each year, which is a good number to obtain. Though it appears that the cultural background and history of these two counties in the north differ, their school sizes, organization, and educational output are roughly the same under the contemporary education system. Without a doubt, the education of Fengning and Qufu is good compared to the many counties that sometimes fail to send a hundred students to university. However, good counties are not all that remarkable and their prominence is nothing more than this. Even places such as Qufu discourage people from becoming too fixated on its education and culture.

At times, a place's culture really does rise vibrantly and fade quickly. Not much reason can be found for the rise of Confucius as a master writer. His father, Shuliang He, was a soldier and not a literati, and it is said that he was "known for

courage and power among princes."[1] In folklore, his mother was a peasant girl. Nishan, the hometown of Confucius, was a backcountry place. He lost his father at the age of 3, and afterwards, he moved with his mother to Queli, the capital of the state of Lu. At the time, Queli had no great intellectuals for Confucius to follow. Therefore, it really is a miracle of nature for Confucius to have been so deeply cultivated in and have attained such a high level of culture. In the post-Confucius era, Qufu didn't have that many talented people, but they were also never exhausted. You can basically say that it had talented people in every generation. It is interesting that the ancient cultural figures of Qufu do not stick to one pattern. There was such thinkers as Kong Ji (483–402 BCE) and such scholars as Kong Anguo (Western Han, birth and death unknown); and such mainstream poets as Kong Rong (153–208 CE), such legendary dramatists as Kong Shangren (1648–1718 CE), and such lively figures as Jia Fuxi (1590–1674 CE). The Qing Dynasty also produced several scribes, bibliographers, phonologists, and philologists. That generation of talented people and eclectic talent witnessed the fate of Qufu's vigorous rich local culture. In modern times, Qufu has produced quite a few new cultured people, one of whom was Chen Xianrong (1876–1935 BCE) from Cangxiang Street. Chen studied in Japan, he was influenced by popular new fashion, and after returning to China, composed, "Advice for Queli Elders to Immediately Encourage Education," which can be regarded as the most ardent backing for education and learning in the history of Qufu. He said: "The world's nations compete for survival; the struggle of existence does not depend on industry, agriculture, commerce, and the military, but on education."[2] "If there is eagerness for education, then the country will flourish; if not, then the country will perish!"[3] He also motived people to develop education by telling them the glorious history of education in Qufu: "Shandong is home to sages and is a land of poems and songs. It has been doing well since the Han and Tang dynasties thanks to Confucius."[4] Generally speaking, stern outcries to promote some kind of cause are often ominous. And while the need for these kinds of outcries certainly has given rise to a very serious crisis, they often fail to deliver any real change. Qufu's cultural history did not produce any outstanding figures in the 20th century; even well-known national figures were few in number. Among the schools in Qufu, Qufu Normal University's predecessor was Shandong Provincial Number Two Normal School. In this century, the school is renowned and has distinguishing features, but its reputation and its characteristics are of revolution and not of academics. Revolutionists Fan Bingchen, Song Huanwu, Chu Tunan, and Ren Baige had once run the school or worked as teachers there. The most important revolutionary they taught was Wan Li, a leader of the Communist Party of China. Throughout the

[1]Chronicles Compilation Committee of Qufu City (1993), p.108.

[2]Ibid, p. 738.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

modern Chinese revolution, this school was the site of frequent student's strikes and activities organized by CPC branches. Thus it is known as the "Red Second Normal School."

Revolution, war, and political movements were the theme of China in the 20th century, and naturally Qufu too. Culture was rapidly marginalized, even in Qufu. Look at the article "Personages" in the *Qufu City Chronicles*, published by Qilu Press in 1993, and you will see that previous century figures are mostly intellectuals, and that current century figures are mostly soldiers, that is, war heroes, revolutionary martyrs, and model laborers. Those listed in the book who are sort of people of culture are experts in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), cooking, and calligraphy, and folk artists. These people are classified in Tables 6.1 and 6.2.

If thinkers, scholars, writers, scholar-officials, principals, teachers, and calligraphers are regarded as cultural figures; if physicians of TCM, folk artists, and the artisan are regarded as quasi-cultural figures; if chefs and model laborers are regarded as ordinary figures; and if revolutionary martyrs, war heroes, revolutionary cadres, officials, politicians, traitors, KMT soldiers, the enlightened gentry, descendants of Confucius, and the uprising leader are regarded as political figures, then we can draw up two broader categories (see Tables 6.3 and 6.4).

Ancient cultural figures, which made up 72.7 % of the total, dropped to 19.6 % of the total in modern times; and politicians rose from 22.7 % in ancient times to

Table 6.1 Ancient people (total 22 people)

No.	Identity	Number of people
1	Thinker, scholar, writer	14
2	Politician, official	4
3	Calligrapher	2
4	Artisan	1
5	Uprising leader	1

Table 6.2 Modern people (total 46 people)

No.	Identity	Number of people
1	Revolutionary martyr, war hero, revolutionary cadre	16
2	TCM	7
3	Principal, teacher	5
4	Folk artist	4
5	Traitor, KMT solider	3
6	Scholar-official	2
7	Chef	2
8	Calligrapher	2
9	Model laborer	2
10	Duke of Yansheng	1
11	Official	1
12	Enlightened god of earth	1

Table 6.3 Ancient people (total 22 people)

No.	Identity	Number of people	Proportion (%)
1	Cultural figure	16	72.7
2	Political figure	5	22.7
3	Quasi-cultural figure	1	4.5

Table 6.4 Modern people (total 46 people)

No.	Identity	Number of people	Proportion (%)
1	Political figure	22	47.8
2	Quasi-cultural figure	11	23.9
3	Cultural figure	9	19.6
4	Ordinary figure	4	8.7

47.8 % in modern times. This shows that changes have taken place in fashion and culture. But among the "cultural figures" in modern times, there were a considerable number of people who worked as administrative staff in schools or embarked on a political career. Regarding Qufu, an ancient poet once wrote: "Qilu customs are still there; one-hundred thousand people are eager to read."[5] Contemporary Qufu is only the hometown of Confucius. Though the legacy of Confucius and his disciples has disappeared, the seals given to them by descendants of emperors are on display at the Confucius Temple, and this has made the temple a source of tourism capital. When the contemporary poet Guo Moruo visited Qufu, he had found a lost culture, and an empty and desolate mansion. He wrote a poem entitled, "The Kong Mansion," which read: "The Confucius Mansion is huge, and the official work place is wide like the sea. There is no ritual, music, verses, or books, and no atmosphere; only Qing, Ming, Yuan, and Song officials. On an imperial monument, the Chinese character for longevity is engraved on it; on the wall hangs a dazzling imperial cap. Culture no longer takes precedence over prosperity; Culture no longer takes precedence over prosperity; courtyards are left desolate and well pails are rotten".[6] There is no trace of Confucius' true spirit to think and study and to praise education; only his false dress is still there. Culturally speaking, the empty grandeur is a kind of foul atmosphere that weakens its position.

The decline of the old refined culture is irreversible. The sacred place of Qufu has found no way to link and associate it with the contemporary cultural education system. In Nishan, I saw the Confucius Temple being renovated. There was a new coat of bright red and purple paint on the Confucius statue, and I walked under the eaves to whiff the pungent smell of the paint. After work, the migrant workers live in the Nishan Academy of Classical Learning next to the Temple. I noticed that the Academy's court had become their cooking ground, and it was black from

[5]I do not remember the poet, the era or its source, but it may be a poem by the Tang poet Li Bai.

[6]Chronicles Compilation Committee of Qufu City (1993), p. 108.

cooking and full of messy pans. When I opened up the main door to the Academy, I saw rows of migrant workers lying haphazardly on the floor inside and filthy mosquito nets. Of course everything will look nice by the time they leave, but no matter how it is prettified and decorated, it is difficult to reproduce the atmosphere of the discussions and awakening that took place during that time in the Academy. This includes the passageway leading to a group of buildings located in Nishan's Confucius Temple and Academy of Classical Learning, which was destroyed by secondary students from the county towns of Sishui and Wucheng during the Cultural Revolution. Though the buildings were never demolished, the statues there were all gone. Shan Jinyin, who currently serves as the principal of Yulong Hope Elementary School in Fuzidong Village, Nishan Township, told me that he was attending elementary school and joined secondary students in struggling against the Four Olds. They found a grave mound behind the Confucius Temple, and inferred it was the tomb of someone from the Kong family. Just like Beijing students, they dug the grave to find the corpse in the Confucian Woods in Qufu. However, what they had were debris rather a coffin, so they concluded it wasn't a tomb but a mound of earth of from building the Confucius Temple. Kong Qingliang, Director of the Nishan Township Education Committee, told me, "Areas with schools went all out in struggles against the Four Olds." Schools were eager than others to break from the old ways of the Confucius Temple and the classical learning. Things changed. The old and new cultural systems were integrated; they were in opposition to each other with the new one established on the ruins of the old system. Though the cultural extremism of the Cultural Revolution and its institutions has been eradicated, we have been unable to rejuvenate the mainstream education system, and we have not thoroughly investigated its old traditions. It is its own system, and it does not rely upon traditional needs or the ability to revive tradition. For this new system, tradition is apparently true but actually false. In the office of Qufu's Number One, there are adages of Confucius engraved on the walls, and in the classrooms of Yulong Hope Elementary School in Fuzidong Village, there are various quotations of Confucius posted on the walls that were written by the school's former principal, all of which seem to promote the Confucian ethical ideal to exercise self-restraint and return to propriety. However, the principal of Qufu Number One, Chen Yiying, answered my question honestly and openly. He said, "Confucius and Confucianism are certainly influential. People still believe filial piety, loyalty and trust, but the impact of such things on education is trivial and few teachers and students are guided by these teachings. While writing maxims on the wall lets everyone read them, this will not install them deep down inside. There is no relationship between this and textbooks."

There is little correlation between writing maxims and studying textbooks. Not only that, but there is no correlation between ancient maxims and textbooks that were used for 17 years before the Cultural Revolution. The struggle that was carried out against the Four Olds in education by secondary students in the Cultural Revolution was nothing more than hysterical extremism. Because there is "no relationship," Fengning and Qufu stand on the same starting point. Fengning is not necessarily as good as Qufu, and Qufu is not necessarily as worthy of Fengning.

In fact, the extent of Yulong Hope Elementary School's formalization and institutionalization is slightly inferior when compared to Fengning Hope Elementary School.

Yulong Elementary School in Fuzidong Village, Nishan Township, Qufu City, is located at the foot of the village. The village is on a hill next to the school. There used to be a hill where the school yard is now, but when Hope elementary school was built in 1994, the hill was flattened into an exercise yard. When the principal briefed me on this point, he proudly said that the school-building project made people feel like they had the power to move mountains. This school in Fuzidong Village is shared with a small neighboring village called Zhoujiazhuang. The locals there call their village Zhouzhuang. The village has a total of 152 households and a population of over 540 people, which is exactly twice the size of Fuzidong Village's 270 people. More often than not, their school is better funded than Fuzidong Village's school. However, because of the relationship between Fuzidong and Confucius, and because the village has Nishan Confucian Temple and other famous monuments, Zhouzhuang had no choice but to reluctantly name the school Fuzidong. In 1994, the school received 100,000 *yuan* in donations from Shanjia Village Coalmine in Qufu for reconstruction, and so in front of the flag stage on the main campus there is an inscription which reads, "The school has Qin Yuyan and all his employees at the Shanjia Village Coalmine to thank for the 100,000 *yuan* Hope Project donation that made possible the reconstruction of the school." In 1993, Shanjia Village Coalmine and several other companies merged together to form the head office of Yulong Corporation, so the school's full name became "Fuzidong Yulong Hope Elementary School." Usually, the school sign is not hanging outside; most of the time it sits inside the office. Only when the school receives guests or when there are celebrations is the sign hung outside. The school is worried that nearby farmers will use it for firewood. Once during my investigation there, The sign was hung outside when Qin Yuyan, whose name is inscribed on it, visited the school. Originally, Mr. Qin headed the Shanjia Village Coalmine. Now he is chairman of the board, general manager and Party secretary at Yulong Corporation, and head and Party secretary of the coalmine. For 1991, profits totaled 71.67 million *yuan*, which makes it a leading enterprise in Qufu, so from 1994 onwards he was elected deputy director of the Party Committee of the Qufu Municipal People's Congress. On the day he was elected, he came to the school because the Qufu City Hope Project was shooting a special program for publicity, and they needed a few shots of him at the school. Reporting on him at the school ceremony, the township Party secretary of Nishan called him "Director Qin," and the director of Qufu's Education Office called him "Chief Qin." Only the school's principal, Shan Jiyin, who is not too open minded, kept calling him "Boss Qin," his first and smallest rank.

Since Qin Yuyan came to the school, Fuzidong Yulong Hope Elementary School (this name is too long, so it was written as "Fuzidong Elementary School" on the school's stone tablet) raised the national flag. As usual, the national flag and the school's stone tablet were treasured during the ceremony. The flag ceremony was led by the head teacher of Grade Two, Zhang Yanwei, who, with the help of some of his young male students, struggled to raise the flag while standing on a pile of

stools. I happened to pass through the area after the flag was raised, and discovered that it was hanging upside down, so I alerted Zhang Yanwei that it needed to be put up again. I asked the students how long it has been since they held a flag-raising ceremony, and they replied two weeks. This is more relaxed than Fengning Elementary School's unshakable once-a-week flag-raising ceremony.

Like Fengning Elementary School, Fuzidong Elementary School is also "state" in a village, teaching the national curriculum with textbooks and implementing the national unified education system. The elementary school's office is used by the principal and all the teachers. On the south end of the office on the wall hang portraits of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin, and Mao Zedong, with a print of the Education Law of the People's Republic of China on one side of the portraits and a print of the Teachers Law of the People's Republic of China on the other side of the portraits. Principal Shan Jiyin's office is located in the southeast corner. On the wall to his right hangs a portrait of Sun Yat-sen, and on the wall behind him is a map of the People's Republic of China. Close to the south gable there is a large blackboard with "Teacher on Duty Table," "New Teacher Quality Requirements," "Work Outline," and "Daily Schedule" written on it in chalk. Under the "Teacher on Duty Table" is a special note regarding duty requirements: "Take your responsibilities seriously and remain committed to your work." Under the heading "New Teacher Quality Requirements," there are a total of 6 items: link culture with doctrine, link emotion with logic, link reading with writing, link instruction with learning, link strictness with flexibility, and link hardship with happiness. My impression was that these items are more so teaching requirements than they are requirements for teachers, but slogans from higher education have become part of the system. Next to these six requirements is a drawing of an inkwell, a dip pin, and an open book with the words, "Study for rise of the Chinese nation," written in it in red chalk. The campus also has a variety of written slogans. There is the rather sincere slogan, "Do everything for the children, and for all the children; and for the children, do everything"; and the latest concept in Chinese education, "Improve the quality of education to improve the quality of the nation." A while ago, Principal Shan Jiyin participated in a "training course on improving the quality of education" held by county's Education Office, where at he wrote a paper entitled, "Well-Rounded Education." He was so pleased with the paper that he made it part of his record. One can say that Fuzidong Elementary School has basically satisfied the requirements of the country and its education system for elementary school. Since Shan Jiyin became the school's principal, the test scores of the students for junior secondary school have made their way to the forefront in the township, and for the past two years have been the top two. But due to the economy, the make-up of the teachers, the principal's style, the style and features of the school buildings, as well as various other factors, Fuzidong Elementary School is closer to its local area, and to nature. It is not as institutionalized and strict as Fengning Elementary School, and the degree by which the local area is nationalized is less. By carrying out this type of analysis of a small village and then comparing that data with Fengning Elementary School, a lot of interesting things can be discovered.

According to Fuzidong Elementary School, the school has 9 teachers, but actually there are 8 teachers: the principal, headmaster, and head teachers from preschool to grade five. During my investigation, the headmaster was participating in academic training in the city, and the fifth-grade head teacher very seldom came to work, because his class had already graduated and left the school, so every day I only met 6 teachers. In Fuzidong Elementary School, the principal and headmaster were office teachers, and the remaining 6 were all substitute teachers. The salaries of office teachers in Qufu are higher than in Fengning County. Principal Shan Jiyin takes home more than 700 *yuan* each month, which is more than the salary of the deputy secretary of the township Party committee who administers education in Nishan, because a principal has more seniority. Shan Jiyin is satisfied with his current wage income. He told me he went to visit Shaoshan Hope Elementary School last year in Hunan. While there, he toured Zhangjiajie, and inadvertently climbed a very steep mountain. On his way down, he had to be very careful not to fall. He thought to himself, "It is not easy to make money for a living, do you want to actually account for life here?" The office teachers consider the money that they make to be enough, but the substitute teachers do not earn a living wage. Substitute teachers here make 60 *yuan* a month, but can take home 80 *yuan* if they have many years' experience and are qualified. But preschool class teacher Wang Jilan is only paid by the village, because she was hired by the village and not the school. Wages for formal substitute teachers cannot be paid for by the township, so she receives only 30 *yuan* each month. Thirty *yuan* is very little, and only after repeated fighting was she was finally given an acre of land as compensation. I once asked Kong Qingliang, the director of the township's Education Committee, how he expected people to become substitute teachers with such meager incomes. He replied that substitute teachers are all graduates from junior secondary school, and if they go out to work they can only be unskilled laborers. If they stay in the village teaching, although their income is low, at least their personal safety is guaranteed, and girls and boys spoiled by their parents are more willing to do the work. Recently, higher-ups gave notice requiring all townships to lay off their substitute teachers and begin hiring normal school graduates. But the Nishan Township Education Committee and Fuzidong Elementary School do not think this is possible at the moment. Kong Qingliang told me that neighboring Sishui County simply excluded normal school graduates, and instead use substitute teachers because it is cheaper. The salary for an office teacher who graduated from normal school is ten times that of a substitute teacher, and one school may function well if it has ten teachers.

It is inaccurate to say that all substitute teachers have junior secondary school education levels, Fuzidong Elementary School's fourth-grade head teacher and English teacher, Feng Xianshun, is a senior secondary school graduate, and was also the first person from Zhoujiazhuang Village to go to senior secondary school. He has been teaching at Fuzidong Elementary School already for 20 years, and most of the students he is teaching are the children of his former students. He started as a private teacher, but did not see much promise after a few years of teaching and figured there was a better way to make a living so he left the school.

Just as he was leaving the school, the country began turning private teachers into government employees all at once. This left Feng Xianshun regretting his decision so he returned to the school, but by the time he returned the policy had already ended, and without his name on that list he could only become a substitute teacher. This was really like drawing the short straw, like a sleight of hand trick, and this made the stubborn rural intelligentsia go from bad to worse. If substitute teachers really are laid off next year, then his teaching career would end with no glory. Though several other schools substitute teachers' face an uncertain future, there is no shortage of joy. Only Teacher Feng is full of sorrow. The teacher in his 40s mostly keeps silent about it and his tone is stubborn and hard when he does speak, like he is aloof. When I listen to other teachers teach class, they all use Mandarin; only he uses the local dialect. He switches to a few sentences of Mandarin in the middle of the class, but after a few words he goes back to using his local dialect. His students respond to questions using Mandarin. The students are able to comprehend his local dialect, and the response that he receives after teaching a class is like thunder, so it seems that the students like the introverted teacher. I went to visit him at his home in Zhoujiazhuang, and he was very surprised and happy to see me, but on the surface he was still reticent. The courtyard of his house rests against the side of a mountain, so one side of the mountain serves as part of the courtyard's walls, and the courtyard is very clean and there are many trees. What is particularly unique about his home is the large door, a black wooden door with some embedded iron hoops that are decorated with a green color. The door is elaborate and stylish, and is different from the other doors in the neighborhood. Even more different is the antithetical couplet on it. From west to east, his neighbors' antithetical couplets are mostly about farmers' true feelings regarding wealth, such as, "Good luck comes from east and good fortune from west; happiness comes from south and prosperity from north," "Farmers are prospering; villages are wealthy," and, "Good fortune is like the always running water of the East China Sea; people enjoy longevity as pine trees in southern mountains." Some farmers' antithetical couplets contain conventional etiquette, such as, "The year of the tiger has passed; the new year of the rabbit has come," and "This year is the rise of the rabbit; next year will come the magnificent dragon." Teacher Feng Xianshun's antithetical couplet, which was written by his own hand in slightly clumsy regular script, says: "Only a scholar knows how interesting books are; only a hardworking calligrapher understands how to produce good calligraphic works." This couplet is all about learning and demonstrates that its producer enjoys reading and is happy with his learning singly.

Although he is is happy with his learning singly, after all Feng Xianshun lives in the village, his students are from his village as well as neighboring villages, and he has a good relationship with the villagers and with the parents of students, and it can even be said that the relationship is very friendly. Su Qingzhen, a Zhoujiazhuang villager who teaches fourth grade, took me door to door in Zhoujiazhuang. We would sometimes casually close the doors of his former students, but this house was the home of a current student, so the owner quickly rushed out to meet us and hurriedly requested us to sit down and have a smoke.

The owner of the next house we entered was not as enthusiastic as the previous owner, but the conversation revealed a type of intimacy not granted to outsiders, and after asking a question I knew that he was a cousin of Feng Xianshun. Su Qingzhen's was not far away from Feng Xianshun's home, and one could walk to either home by turning down two alleyways. Su Qingzhen is very comfortable in the village. Whenever she sees people, she greets old ladies by calling them grandma and middle-aged men uncle, and the 19-year-old village woman teacher we say walking around was very conversational and casual. We saw a home wall for students' graffiti, though some sentences are not recognizable. Su Qingzhen raised her head to look back and saw a child moving past us from a distance, and she immediately called out: "Feng, come here! What does this say?" The child immediately ran over to us. Su Qingzhen said she always runs into the parents of her students, and they will stand on the roadside to talk about the students' learning situation. This way if the student has a problem that must be handled, it is easier for the teacher to go to the student's home to notify the parents, and if the parents have something they would like to share, they can go to the teacher's home.

This kind of close relationship between teacher and village is a prominent phenomenon here. This situation is very different from Fengning Hope Elementary School. Fengning Elementary School is part of the country's cultural machinery. But, as far as Humaying Village is concerned, the school is detached from the village, and its teachers are thought of as outsiders by the villagers. The teachers are seen as both national cadres (they are not the same as farmers) and outsiders (they have no ancestral ties to the village). There is no difference between the natures of Fuzidong Elementary School and Fengning Elementary School as cultural machinery for the country, but Fuzidong's teachers, according to the villagers, are "one of us," and so they all know each other exceedingly well. Furthermore, there is emotional closeness and trust, and the teachers are thoroughly familiar with the students and understand their backgrounds. The close relationship between teachers and villagers greatly reduces the distance between contemporary schools, a strange system from outside, and the villages. To a great extent, this rids the feeling of alienation between schools and villages by essentially helping the farmers and their children accept something alien. It also helps the teachers better translate a strange discourse system into something that the village community can easily understand and accept, and in the process, use the spirit of the village to correct any misunderstandings regarding mainstream education. This would actually intentionally or unintentionally leave some fresh, dynamic stuff in education. Kong Qingliang, Director of the Nishan Township Education Committee, once spoke highly of how this close relationship brought convenience to education, saying: "Teachers and villagers are uncles, nephews, and cousins. Words do not need to be polite and can be straight to the point. Also, since many of the parents were students of the teachers, the teachers do not need to be modest when something is not right, and can even lesson the parents: 'You had this problem when you went to school!'" In the hometown of Confucius, particular attention is paid to ethical relationships. Close relationships bring a lot of convenience to schools, and this

also makes it much easier for many village elementary schools to ask the villages for funding. However, this sense of kinship is by no means merely a "work convenience." It has a substantial impact on educational content and the school system and even the classroom atmosphere.

The classroom atmosphere at Fuzidong Elementary School, in contrast to that at Fengning Elementary School, is clearly more cordial, unrestrained, active, and gratifying, and the teachers' command of the classroom is not divorced from the students and distant like it is at Fengning Elementary School. Here, there is more obvious sincerity and closeness between teachers and students. The students fear little teachers and the discourse system that they represent and do not feel too much pressure. In the classroom, a family-like atmosphere emerges, in which students' follow their passions and let down their guard and teachers' work hard with patience and sincerity.

My conversation with students also confirmed this point. Next to the campus flower bed, I had separate talks with several class officials from Grades Three and Four. Although I was a stranger they had just met and they were appointed by their homeroom teacher temporarily to meet me, these students' attitudes were natural and more casual than Wang Chunlei, the third-grade class leader from Fengning Elementary School. In the conversation, they were not nervous. They just listened carefully to the sincere inquiry, answered questions unthinkingly, and did not evade difficult questions regarding the school, the village, and even their own family. The whole conversation was carried out effortlessly and easily, and before they realized it, they had talked for an entire class period. I was greatly surprised by the unboundedness of these pupils, and a similar surprising situation occurred when I was reading some student compositions. Because the teachers here do not implement existing formalized education as good as big schools such as Fengning, student essays here are less influenced by "standardized" guidelines and language. This is not because Fuzidong Elementary School teachers have no patterning requirements for student essays, but due to the more natural and relaxed overall atmosphere of the school, the classroom, and between teachers and students, and due to the teachers themselves, who do not fully control the patterning of things, so when the students write essays, their works are more natural and spontaneous. In spite of this fault, in which the terminology and sentences of writings are neither standardized nor accurate, the student's true observations and feelings are revealed in writing, and they at least get the teacher's tacit approval, which makes people feel some kind of educational success.

I think two essays by fourth-grade student Feng Yazhou are quite natural and interesting. He wrote two essays about something that happened between him and his classmate Feng Haiying.

My Classmate and I

My classmate Feng Haiying and I are devoted friends. We go to school together in the morning and go home together in the afternoon. Once Feng Haiying and I planned to go play at temple, but after school I forgot. Early the next morning Feng Haiying asked me why I didn't go, and said I was disloyal. I told him I probably ate too much to remember that appointment. Feng Haiying said that he would give me a chance today, so I thanked

him. He said today we would go to the movies together. I asked Feng Haiying: "Who said there will be a movie?" He asked: "So you don't want to go?" I said: "Who would not go see a movie." After the movie, he said: "This is a good movie." I said: "Today I wasn't disloyal." The day after that we started exams, and I wrote and wrote all that I could, then turned to him and asked: "Can I see what you wrote?" He didn't respond. I asked again, but he still didn't respond. On the third time, he refused my request. Since then, our relationship has been severed. One day Feng Haiying's mother told us a story about an honest child. After listening, the both of us felt touched, and since then we have been friends again.

Mountain Climbing

Feng Haiying, Feng Xianchun, and I went mountain climbing for fun. We walked to the mountain side and then Feng Haiying proposed: "Let's see who can climb up first!" Feng Xianchun and I said: "OK!" We started. I climbed up very fast and after a while, after I climbed halfway up, my legs started to burn. I resumed climbing for a bit, but then I became tired and my back and legs hurt. I would've loved to stop for a rest, but Feng Haiying and Feng Xianchun had already passed me. Feng Haiying turned around and said to me: "Hurry, climb!" I tiredly said: "I can't continue." I sat on a large stone to have a rest in the fresh breeze. Just then, Feng Haiying and Feng Xianchun said: "We climbed up!" Feng Xianchun then said: "Don't be lazy!" All of a sudden I had a burst of energy. After a moment, I finally climbed to the top, where I looked to the east and looked to the west. Unwittingly I saw a woman walking down and carrying firewood on her shoulder. Suddenly, I thought of the text "Mountain Heaver." Looking down from the mountain, village farmers looked like small ants, and cars looked like toy cars. Feng Haiying walked over to a big pine tree in front of us and picked up a sparrow. He said: "You would never have expected to end up in my hands!" By climbing this mountain, I increased my knowledge, and exercised my body. Since then, we have been paying more attention to exercise and do more outdoor activities.

Being true to life, when "My Classmate and I" deals with the conversations between two students, it does not avoid local dialect and is meticulous. According to "Mountain Climbing," in the mountain the author was bored so he looked to the east and looked to the west. When he saw a woman carrying firewood on her shoulder, he thought of the text "Mountain Heaver." The essay uses the metaphor "village farmers looked like small ants." In addition, Feng Haiying gave the unreasonable comment that "You would never have expected to end up in my hands!" All this shows that although Feng Yazhou ends his essay in a conventional way by giving it "a bright tail" and "making it educational," he is able to use his own language in depicting his personal experiences and has managed to keep his interest and natural instincts from being completely destroyed by the current models for essays required in the current education system. Mr. Feng Xianshun gave an "A" to his "My Classmate and I." This gave legitimacy to and even encouraged, to some extent, this type of writing and language in the context of Fuzidong Elementary School. As a result, this made it possible for the abovementioned "literary language" and "colloquial language" to communicate and integrate with each other to some extent in Fuzidong Elementary School.

It is not true that teachers of Fuzidong Elementary School haven't worked to regulate their students' essays in accordance with government required models. In his essay "My Classmate and I," the fourth-grade student Feng Wang wrote about the experiences he shared with his classmate. It is about child enjoyment,

but it wasn't well written. In his comments on the essay, the teacher criticized the author for "failing to have a theme" and asked him to write an outline first for his next essay "The Courtyard of My Home." He did write an outline first for his next essay in great details. Briefly the outline goes like this: "1. Title: 'The Courtyard of My Home.' 2. Theme: It makes my family happy. 3. Arrangements of material: (1) What does the courtyard look like? (2) What is it like in the morning, at noon, and in the afternoon? (3) What does it make me think of?" The outline looks good. However, he didn't follow the outline in his essay, and the teacher couldn't do anything about it.

Sometimes allowing outstanding students to write a free and natural way makes it possible for them to make the best possible use of their oral language and keep true to their experiences, and help them integrate literary language into their essays. This is what occurred to me when I read "Sacred Water Lake," an essay by the fourth-grade student Zhang Juan. It essay reads as follows:

> On a Saturday morning, dad woke me up and said, "Will you come with me to Sacred Water Lake?" I said, "Good. I would be pleased." After breakfast when we were about to set off, sister Zhang Yu came to play with me. I suggested, "Sister, will you join me and my dad in a tour of Sacred Water Lake?" She said, "I'm here to pick you up for a tour there." I said, "Let's go."
>
> It wasn't long before we arrived at our destination. The first thing I saw there was a white airplane, and then I saw a high dam. I also saw trees in Sacred Water Lake Park including peach, apricot, and pear trees, and they all vied with each other to be in full bloom. The red flowers were like fire, the pink ones were like the glow, and the white flowers were like snow. The flowers were sweet and as I closed my eyes, I felt as if the trees were laden with fruit. Wild flowers were here and there in bundles. I could name some of them, and I didn't know the others, but they were all scattered among the grass in which they were like eyes and stars blinking. There was a crane in the park. It fixed its eyes on the water as if it were waiting for the fish to surface so that it could fly over to catch them. We came to the lakeside. The lake stretched as far as my eyes could see. There were dozens of boats along the shore of the lake. Some of them were like pavilions, dragons, chicks, and ducklings. The water of the lake was just as clean as a green gem and glittered like sunshine reflecting off mirrors. When the breeze rippled the lake surface under the sunshine, the golden glows looked like as if gold pieces had been spread over the lake. We came aboard a dragon-shaped boat and when the boat started to move, I felt as if the legendary dragon coming from heaven to pick up the emperor. I regarded our boat as a genuine a dragon and us as emperors. When we reached the center of the lake, I realized that the blue sky was reflected in the clear water and looked even bluer; and I also found that the clouds were reflected in the clear water and grew even whiter. When I looked far, I saw rows of willows along the shore of the lake and the willows swept across over the lake surface. If you don't look carefully, you might have thought they were a group of beautiful girls were combing their hair on the lake. All of a sudden, my sister said, "You are beautiful." This interrupted me. Dad ordered the boat to go back and the boatman made a circle and brought us back to the shore.
>
> Sacred Water Lake has fascinating landscape and is worth enjoying on its own merit. Please come and have a closer look at it if you have time. How beautiful Sacred Water Lake is!

This essay is about the author's hometown. It is about Sacred Water Lake, a park based on Nishan Reservoir close to Fuzidong Elementary School. It is true

that the park has a demobilized airplane donated by the Chinese Air Force, willows are gown along the shores of the lake, and there are different types of boats on the lake. Zhang Juan was quick to discover the beautiful things in her hometown. In her essay she envisages how the dragon boat picks up the emperor, but this is not in accord with the requirements of modern Chinese literary language, but it makes people believe that this is a wish of a child. It is most interesting that in a fluent and relaxed narration of things, she is able to copy the right sentences from her textbooks. For example, it is obvious that in the section about peach, apricot, and pear trees vying with each other to be in full bloom in spring and about flowers blinking was copied from Zhu Ziqing's "Spring." It is really great of a fourth-grade student from an elementary school to use these borrowed sentences properly. In this essay by Zhang Juan, colloquial language is smoothly integrated with literary language. With these two types of language being successfully grafted to each other, literary language is dynamic in this kind of essay, which is unique. Excessively strict and standard education designed to promote literary language will often stifle colloquial language and the truly dynamic aspects of literary language. The unintentional non-standard education given by Fuzidong Elementary School could be enlightening.

Sacred Water Lake Zhang Juan wrote about is two kilometers from Fuzidong Elementary School, and its water surface covers more than 670 ha. This lake was built in the 1960s as a reservoir. It has now been turned into a tourist destination by the Qufu Municipal Cultural Relics Administrative Committee. The Confucius Temple in Nishan, the Nishan Academy, and the Fuzi Cave (also known as the Kunling Cave) where Confucius was said to be breastfed by a tiger are all nearby under the jurisdiction of the same committee. Their ticket sales go to the Fengning County Government, rather than to Fuzidong Village and Nishan Township. Before the 1960s Fuzidong Village was situated where the reservoir area is, and was relocated to the hills to make way for the construction of the reservoir, so the village has poor access to transportation. The original Fuzidong Village was on the left of the Confucius Temple, but now it is behind it. The Party secretary of the village told me that a local proverb warns that it is better to be in front of or on the left of the temple than to be behind or on the right of it. The reason is that the temple could destroy the *feng shui* of areas behind and on the right of it and make it difficult for the areas for generations to come. The secretary believed that the reason Fuzidong Village hasn't produced talented people for years was probably because of this. It is true that the village hasn't had a university student yet. The one with the highest schooling is the one who was enrolled by the technical school Jining Financial School last year whereas the neighboring Zhuojiazhuang Village has been producing several university students over the past few years. The secretary told me that Fuzidong Village would be relocated away from the hills within the next five years. He pointed to me the new location of the village, and it is exactly on the left of the temple. He told me that the reason for the relocation was to provide the village with better access to transportation. But I am not sure whether this is caused by the superstition that the village has been held back by the temple in producing talented people. Fuzidong Village's understanding of why it hasn't

produced university students is so similar to that of Humaying Village: both believe that they are held back by something (a temple or mountain). This explanation renders Confucius, a literary master, useless because instead of helping its place of birth with its literary development, he has been holding it back for decades.

Another striking similarity between Fengning Hope Elementary School and Fuzidong Elementary School is that their Chinese teachers liked the same types of texts from their Chinese textbooks. Generally speaking, in every class I sat in on, the teacher would teach the text he or she liked the best and was most sure of teaching well. Ms. Li Jianhua at Fengning Hope Elementary School chose "The General and Premier Make Peace" while Ms. Xiu Guichun selected "The Gecko Borrows a Tail." The former is a historical story, and the latter is a piece on science. When I sat in on the Chinese classes by Feng Xianshun and Zhang Yanwei at Fuzidong Elementary School, Feng's choice was "Tian Ji and a Horse Race," and Zhang Yanwei's was "Observing a Lunar Eclipse." And this time too, one is a historical story, and the other is about science. This is probably because texts on history and science are more knowledgeable than other texts from Chinese textbooks, and they are also the favorite texts of the teachers as they are most familiar with these texts. This even applies both to government-funded teachers who graduated from normal schools and to private teachers from local areas.

Qufu and Fengning share the same difficulty in finding employment for university and technical school graduates. The one from Fuzidong Village who was enrolled by Jining Financial School last year is Liu Lei, the son of Wang Jilan, a teacher of the preschool class of Fuzidong Elementary School. Liu Lei's father teaches at Nishan Junior Secondary School. Wang Jilan and her husband are very much worried about how to find employment for his son. The only connection they could rely on is an official of the traffic authorities of Sishui County, and they have paid several visits to him. Few senior and junior secondary school graduates here stay on the farm; most of them become migrant workers. In most cases, the young people here travel to Weihai and surrounding areas to develop aquatic production, and they also go to the Northwest including Xinjiang and Qinghai. Some senior and junior secondary school graduates here stay in their hometown to provide services and develop breeding and husbandry, but without much success. The young educated people here are just as depressed as those in Fengning County. Feng Xianshun, Su Qingzhen and I read two sections of complaints which were definitely written by senior and junior secondary school graduates. They read: "Junior secondary school graduates simply wasted a several years which they should have spent on working. They failed to pass the junior secondary school entrance exam and were rejected by technical schools. They want to drown themselves in a river, but they believe they are still too young to do that. They want to become accountants, but they are poor at abacus." "Why should we Chinese learn English? We should hand in a blank English examination paper to indicate that we are Chinese." This shows that the graduates are hopeless of finding a place following education and protest that what they have been taught is irrelevant to rural life.

We mentioned this to Shan Jiyin, principal of Fuzidong Elementary School. He responded by expressing his worry that this could lead to a second wave of regarding education useless. However, when I talked about it with the parents of students in their villages, there was no sign of them believing that education was useless. Few of them keep their nose in how their children are doing in schools, but they take their children's examination reports seriously. When we came to the huge amount of money they would have to pay for their children's education at senior secondary school and university, these farmers who do farming for a meager pay gave a firm answer: "We'll fund their education no matter how difficult it is." "I dare to support them if they are able to move on." This probably is the most simple and the staunchest support for the development of Chinese education and the continuation of Chinese culture.

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